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HEARD, Joseph Norman, 1922-
THE ASSIMILATION OF CAPTIVES ON THE
AMERICAN FRONTIER IN THE EIGHTEENTH
AND NINETEENTH CENTURIES.

The Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College, Ph.D., 1977
History, United States

University Microfilms International, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106

THE ASSIMILATION OF CAPTIVES ON THE AMERICAN FRONTIER
IN THE EIGHTEENTH AND NINETEENTH CENTURIES

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

in

The Department of History

by
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December 1977

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Without the encouragement and assistance of a considerable number of individuals this dissertation would never have been completed. I would like to express my appreciation to the members of my committee and, especially, to the chairman, Dr. John L. Loos, for invaluable guidance and assistance. I greatly appreciate, also, the valuable advice of the following ethnohistorians: Dr. Wilcomb E. Washburn, Dr. William N. Fenton, Dr. Arrell M. Gibson, Savoie Lottinville, and Gaines Kincaid. Finally, I would like to express heartfelt appreciation to my wife, Joyce Boudreaux Heard, for her infinite patience and understanding. Her courage during thirty years of adversity has sustained me and inspired many.

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ABSTRACT

THE ASSIMILATION OF CAPTIVES ON THE AMERICAN FRONTIER IN THE EIGHTEENTH AND NINETEENTH CENTURIES

The experiences of white persons held in captivity by Indians have fascinated readers for almost three centuries. Hundreds of redeemed captives have written or related accounts of their adventures, and many of them acknowledged that they had enjoyed the life style of their captors. Other former captives charged, however, that they had been brutalized by the Indians to the point of preferring death to a life of captivity. Many captives retained almost no recollection of white civilization, having lost the use of their native languages and even forgotten their own names. They had become proficient in the skills required for survival in the wilderness and, except for the color of their skins, they could scarcely be distinguished from their captors.

This study analyzes narratives of captivity in order to identify and evaluate factors which facilitated or retarded assimilation. A number of anthropologists and historians have suggested the need for a study, based upon a large number of cases, which would help to determine why

some captives became "white Indians" while others completely rejected native American culture. Scholars have speculated that both white and Indian children, when exposed to both civilizations, invariably preferred the Indian way of life. The experiences of Indian children reared by whites were analyzed, therefore, to ascertain whether assimilation occurred along similar lines among both races.

The first section of this study examines Indian-white relationships as a contest of civilizations. While the Indian perceived that the white man held superior technological knowledge which could make his life easier, he rejected many aspects of European culture, and he did not consider his own civilization to be inferior. Many whites, on the other hand, regarded Indians as savages who must be forced to abandon their way of life for the benefit of both races. The experiences of young captives who were adopted by Indian families show that these whites were treated as natural-born Indians, and that they accepted and enjoyed the way of life of their captors.

The next section looks at factors which have been suggested as determinants of the assimilation of white captives. It was concluded that the original cultural milieu of the captive was of no importance as a determinant. Persons of all races and cultural backgrounds reacted to captivity in much the same way. The cultural

characteristics of the captors, also, had little influence on assimilation. While some tribes treated captives more brutally than others, abuse delayed but did not prevent Indianization. A lengthy captivity resulted in greater assimilation than a brief one, but many captives became substantially Indianized in a matter of months. It was concluded that the most important factor in determining assimilation was age at the time of captivity. Boys and girls captured below the age of puberty almost always became assimilated while persons taken prisoner above that age usually retained the desire to return to white civilization.

The final section compares the assimilation of Indian children reared by whites during frontier times with that of white children who were captured by Indians. It was concluded that an Indian child reared and cherished in a white family became assimilated in much the same manner as a white child adopted by an Indian family. The determining factor was age at the time of removal from natural parents for Indian children as well as for whites. Indian children educated at boarding schools became less assimilated than those reared in white families because teachers regarded them as persons of inferior culture and because associations with other Indian students reinforced tribal ties and cultural predilections.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Beginning with sixteenth century Spanish explorers and continuing until the 1880's, thousands of white persons were captured by Indians within the present boundaries of the United States. While a majority of them eventually were redeemed by their families, hundreds of captives became so completely assimilated as to be designated "white Indians." Many white males became warriors and raided frontier settlements. A large number of captive females married Indians and gave birth to half-breed children. A considerable number of captives resisted attempts to redeem them, and when forcibly restored to their white families they sought the opportunity to escape and rejoin the Indians.¹ Many captives retained little or no recollection of white civilization, having lost the use of their native languages and forgotten their own names. They had become proficient in the skills required for survival in

¹ For an account of the reactions of hundreds of captives given up by the Shawnees as a result of Colonel Henry Bouquet's expedition see William Smith, An Expedition Against the Ohio Indians in 1764 (Philadelphia: W. Bradford, 1765), 26-29.

Indian civilization and, except for the color of their skins, they could scarcely be distinguished from their captors.²

Many redeemed captives wrote or told of their experiences, and it is the primary objective of this study to analyze these narratives in order to identify and evaluate factors which facilitated or retarded assimilation. Such a study was suggested a half century ago by Dr. John R. Swanton, Smithsonian Institution ethnologist. He speculated that if there are psychological differences between races, evidence of this fact could be obtained by a study of individuals of one race who were captured at an early age by those of another and brought up wholly immersed in the culture of the other. "Psychological distinction between the two" should be observed among the captives "as an element unaccountable on the basis of their cultural surroundings." Swanton sifted evidence obtained from a number of narratives of captivity and found no evidence of such a psychological distinction. He recommended, however, that the number of cases studied should

2 The scholarly introductions to recent collections of narratives of captivity provide interesting generalizations on the reactions of captives to the Indian way of life. See Howard Peckham, Captured by Indians (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1954), and Richard Van Der Beets, Held Captive by Indians (Knoxville, University of Tennessee Press, 1973).

be greatly increased and reciprocal cases of primitive peoples held by whites investigated before formulating final conclusions.³

More than thirty years later William N. Fenton included the topic among the ethnohistorical questions in need of investigation,⁴ but as yet no study of assimilation of white captives exists which is based upon an adequate number of cases and covers tribal culture areas throughout the present United States. Aspects of the topic have been analyzed in historical, anthropological, and medical journals, however, and much useful information is contained in these scattered sources.

Dr. Erwin H. Ackerknecht, physician and anthropologist, became interested in Indian captives while studying the history of malaria in the upper Mississippi Valley. While reading narratives of early explorers he noted references to "white Indians" and read with amazement of the remarkable abilities of both captors and captives to withstand torture and survive terrible wounds.⁵ Additional research resulted in publication of his article,

3 John R. Swanton, "Notes on the Mental Assimilation of Races," Journal of the Washington Academy of Sciences, XVI (1926), 493, 502.

4 William N. Fenton, American Indian and White Relations to 1830 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1957), 18.

5 Erwin H. Ackerknecht, Medicine and Ethnology (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1971), 14.

"White Indians," which concludes that the assimilation of captives was the result of Indian "unity of thought and action and a kind of social cohesion which deeply appealed to them, and which they did not find with the whites."⁶ Although Ackerknecht's article is valuable, especially for its medical insights, it is based on the life histories of only eight captives.

An article which provides some comparative studies of assimilation is Dr. A. Irving Hallowell's "American Indian, White and Black: The Phenomenon of Transculturation." Professor Emeritus of Anthropology at the University of Pennsylvania, Hallowell is particularly enlightening regarding the differences between acculturation of groups and assimilation (or transculturation) of individuals. The former consists of persons who remain functioning members of an organized group while undergoing readjustment; the latter involves individuals whose identification with the group to which they had formerly belonged has been broken. Hallowell analyzes the assimilation of black captives, as well as whites, a subject largely ignored by other researchers. Further, he compares the assimilation of captives held by Indians to that of seamen who were cast away among Pacific Islanders and Christian boys seized for sultan's service in the Ottoman Empire. Perhaps

6 Erwin H. Ackerknecht, "White Indians," Bulletin of the History of Medicine, XV (1944), 15-36.

his most significant contribution is an analysis of the differences in the roles open to the white captive among Indians and the Indian in white society. While his article probably is the best analysis of assimilation of captives yet published, he readily concedes that it is based upon an insufficient number of cases.⁷

The most recent historian to publish in this field is Dr. James Axtell. His article, "The White Indians of Colonial America," as the title indicates, is limited to colonial captivities.⁸ Some of his conclusions appear to contradict the preponderance of evidence presented by other students of the subject. His assertions that reports of Indian cruelty to captives are exaggerated, that prisoners selected for assimilation were the weak and defenseless, and that a carefully planned educational program was employed to transform whites into Indians merit further investigation.

In a persuasive article, Bernard W. Sheehan asserts that a satisfactory account of Indian-white relations remains to be written and calls for the subject to be considered "a common ground of history and ethnology."⁹ The

7 A. Irving Hallowell, "American Indians, White and Black," Current Anthropology, IV (1963), 519-31.

8 James Axtell, "The White Indians of Colonial America," William and Mary Quarterly, Series III, XXXII (1975), 55-88.

9 Bernard W. Sheehan, "Indian-White Relations in Early America: A Review Essay," William and Mary Quarterly, Series III, XXVI (1969), 269-70.

present dissertation is intended to investigate one aspect of this problem--assimilation of captives. Ideally, the researcher should be trained in psychology, sociology, philosophy, geography, literature and bibliography, as well as history and ethnology. No definitive study is attempted here, but the writer has collected a large number of case studies and bases his conclusions on "the common ground of history and ethnology."

It is intended in this study to analyze narratives of captivity among the North American Indians in an effort to ascertain why some prisoners preferred death to captivity while others readily adopted the way of life of their captors. The case study method will be employed, based upon the experiences of more than 100 captives taken in the present United States between 1528 and 1885. Information has been obtained from published narratives, manuscript materials, newspaper articles and government reports. An initial chapter will analyze assimilation as a contest between Indian and white civilizations. Then an appraisal will be made of the importance of such factors as the original cultural milieu, treatment of captives in various culture areas, duration of captivity, and the age of the victim at the time of capture in determining the course and degree of assimilation. As a control, attention will

be given to problems of redeemed captives and to the assimilation of Indian children reared in white families or boarding schools.

In seeking to establish correlations it is necessary to estimate the extent of assimilation of captives. This is difficult because of the lack of a satisfactory model which interprets cultural traits in terms of degrees of assimilation. Learning the Indian language was a sign of the beginning of assimilation, even for those who longed to return to their white families. Attaining Indian skills, such as use of the bow and arrow, indicates some coming to terms with the new way of life. Marrying an Indian would appear to provide proof of assimilation if one could be certain that the captive did it voluntarily. Participation in raids against white settlements does not present positive proof of Indianization unless it can be shown that such participation was voluntary. Even the rejection of an opportunity to return in safety to one's white family may not be an indication of assimilation, for it may have resulted from shame rather than from a desire to remain with the Indians. Similarly, failure to attempt to escape is not proof of assimilation, for fear of being caught may have overridden a cherished hope to return, but repeated attempts to escape do present positive proof of resistance to Indianization. Only after a large number of cases are analyzed is it possible to recognize patterns which assist in estimating the extent

of a captive's adoption of the Indian way of life. While correlations based upon these traits will lack precision, they should be sufficiently valid to permit the formulation of meaningful generalizations.

The tradition of captive-taking among North American Indians goes back to prehistoric times. Centuries before white men came to these shores, captives were taken from neighboring tribes to replenish losses suffered in warfare or to obtain victims to torture in the spirit of revenge.¹⁰ When warfare developed between Europeans and Indians, white captives were taken for the same reasons and, in addition, to hold for ransom or to gain favor with an allied European government or colony.¹¹

The Canadian Indians in their early New England attacks seized captives primarily to hold for ransom. Colonial officials attempted to discourage paying for the return of captives as it led to more raids, but ransom was paid by governments and citizens in increasing amounts as the kidnappers became more adept. After 1753, however, the objective changed. The Indians of New York, western

¹⁰ Frederick Webb Hodge, Handbook of Indians North of Mexico (2 vols. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1912), I, 203-206.

¹¹ For example, see Edward Baynes, Adjutant General, British Army, General Orders Respecting Head-Money to be Paid Indians for the Capture of Americans. Kingston, July 26, 1813, (RG8C 1170), Public Archives of Canada, Ottawa.

Pennsylvania and Ohio "had no Quebec or Montreal in which to sell their human chattels to compassionate French families or anxious English relatives." They held captives, therefore, largely to adopt as replacements for relatives killed in battle.¹²

Indians in every region of the present United States held at least a few white captives. East of the Mississippi the majority was taken in New England, northern New York, western Pennsylvania, western Virginia and Kentucky. Whites in the Southeast seemed, by and large, to have avoided falling into the hands of the Indians.¹³ In the West most narratives of captivity describe experiences among the Plains tribes or those of the southwestern deserts. Few accounts were found of captives taken in the northern Rockies or on the Pacific coast.¹⁴

Frontiersmen, with good reason, lived in constant fear of Indian captivity. For men, capture frequently ended in death by the most excruciating torture Indians

¹² Axtell, "The White Indians of Colonial America," 59-60.

¹³ R. W. G. Vail, The Voice of the Old Frontier (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1949), 41.

¹⁴ An exception was the Marcus Whitman massacre in which 50 captives were seized. See Peter Skene Ogden to Rev. E. Walker, December 31, 1847, Coe Collection of Western American Manuscripts (Yale University), 503. Ogden succeeded in obtaining the release of the prisoners and his correspondence provides their names and ages.

could learn from Europeans or devise by themselves. Women feared lifelong bondage, forced marriage, and rape. Frontier people tried to keep always on guard against Indian captivity, but sometimes there was no way short of suicide to avoid falling into the hands of raiders.

The Indians' favorite method of attack was to surround a cabin during the pre-dawn hours and to rush the family when the father came outdoors at first light. They characteristically would massacre men, old women, and children too small to travel, take the young women and older children captive, and be well on their way back to their villages before the neighbors of the victims could organize for pursuit.¹⁵ Frequently the surviving members of the family were compelled to carry the scalps of their parents and little brothers and sisters, an experience which by European logic would have instilled in them such a hatred of the Indians as to make assimilation impossible.¹⁶

There is, however, abundant evidence that many captives quickly accepted the Indians as their own people

¹⁵ Dale Van Every, A Company of Heroes: The American Frontier, 1775-1783 (New York: Morrow, 1962), 117-20.

¹⁶ An example of this practice is provided in the narrative of David Boyd's captivity. David became a complete Indian in spite of this experience. See "The Captivity of David Boyd" in the chapter which follows on treatment of captives in various Indian culture areas.

and came to regard the whites as enemies. This fact was especially clearly demonstrated in November, 1764 when Colonel Henry Bouquet invaded the Shawnee stronghold on the Muskingum River and compelled the Indians to release hundreds of prisoners.¹⁷ Many captives had been with the Indians so long that they had forgotten their native languages. It was necessary to list them on the official log under such entries as "Cut-Arm" or "German Girl" because they could no longer remember their own names. By the time the returning army reached the settlements, two young women named Rhoda Boyd and Elizabeth Studebaker had already escaped and fled into the wilderness to rejoin their Indian families. The soldiers stood guard over others to prevent them from running away. One reason for the reluctance of some of the women to leave their Indian husbands was that they had half-breed children by these men whom they did not wish to abandon. In some cases they had older children who were all white and younger children who were half Indian.¹⁸

This scene, on a smaller scale, was repeated again and again for the next one hundred and twenty years. Throughout the West, white captives in the vicinity of

17 Henry Bouquet to Colonel Lewis, November 15, 1764, Bouquet Collection, A 21, Public Archives of Canada, Ottawa.

18 Dale Van Every, Forth to the Wilderness (New York: Morrow, 1961), 217-18.

frontier forts painted their faces to conceal their identities from officers who would have redeemed them. In Texas, many whites restored to their families after years of Comanche or Kiowa captivity seized the first opportunity to escape to the red men.¹⁹

It is probable that the majority of captives did not remain in Indian hands long enough for assimilation to make substantial headway. Many were killed during the journey to the Indian village or tortured upon arrival. Others were ransomed quickly by relatives or traders. Some were sold to French or English settlers within a few months. A surprisingly large number escaped, sometimes killing their captors in the process.

But the fact remains that hundreds of white captives became completely Indianized. In New England alone at least 750 captives whose names are known to history were carried to Canada, and statistics indicate that more than 1,500 were captured whose names were not recorded. Of the 750 whose histories are a matter of record, 92 were killed by the Indians, 60 became completely Indianized, and many of the more than 300 who were returned to their families retained Indian characteristics all of

¹⁹ Carl Coke Rister, Border Captives (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1940), 68-76.

their lives.²⁰ In the Southwest, the scope of captive taking is equally startling. In 1854 New Mexico Governor David Meriwether wrote to the Cheyenne Indian agent, J. W. Whitfield, requesting that he try to ransom 11 Mexican children recently captured near Las Vegas, New Mexico. Whitfield refused to establish the precedent of buying Mexican captives, explaining that it would bankrupt the treasury to pay for those then held at the agency. He was convinced that the Kiowas and Comanches alone held a thousand captives.²¹

The narrative of Indian captivity was one of the most popular genres of American literature for more than a century, and the fact that it never has entirely lost its fascination is demonstrated by the publication of collections of captivity narratives as recently as 1974. The first four such narratives were published in the sixteenth century--one in Spanish, one in Portuguese, one in German, and one in English. The earliest of these was the Relation of Alvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca (Zamora, 1542). A survivor of the Narváez Expedition of 1528, he was cast away on the Texas coast and enslaved by the Indians. His subsequent

20 Richard Slotkin, Regeneration Through Violence (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1973), 97-98.

21 J. W. Whitfield to David Meriwether, September 29, 1854, Letters received from the New Mexico Superintendency, 1851-1875, U. S. Office of Indian Affairs, Record Group 75 (National Archives).

travels with three companions to the Pacific Coast of Mexico constitute one of the great adventures of American history. Another survivor of the Narváez Expedition was Juan Ortiz. His account of his captivity by Florida Indians is related in one of the following chapters of this thesis. Hans Staden, a German, was shipwrecked on the coast of Brazil in 1549 and taken by the Tupi tribe. His narrative, Wahraftige (Marburg, 1557), was published three years after his recovery by a French ship. The first English captive was Job Hortop, a sailor with John Hawkins. Hortop was captured in Mexico in 1567. His narrative, The Trauailes of an Englishman, was published in London in 1591.²²

The earliest captivity narrative in the English colonies was the account of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson (Boston, 1682), a Puritan minister's wife abducted in 1675 during King Philip's War. No copy of the first edition survives and the exact title is uncertain. It is one of the most popular of all captivity narratives, having been published in more than 30 editions.²³

During the colonial wars between the English and French the number of captives increased tremendously and

22 Vail, The Voice of the Old Frontier, 29-30.

23 Ibid., 31-33. Vail's study includes an invaluable bibliographic essay which has opened the field of pre-nineteenth century captivity narratives to researchers in several disciplines.

hundreds of narratives were published between 1690 and 1763. Others were written as the result of captures during Pontiac's War, and beginning in the 1780's accounts of prisoners taken during the American Revolution began to appear. As United States citizens moved westward they began to encounter mounted Indians, and whites who fell into captivity wrote about cultures that varied greatly from those of eastern woodland tribes. The Sioux uprising in Minnesota during the Civil War resulted in many captivities and some of the most gripping of narratives. The last white people captured north of Mexico were held by the Apaches and Plains Indians and some of them survived to publish their own stories as recently as the 1920's.²⁴

Although scholars have demonstrated confidence in narratives of captivity by citation and inclusion in bibliographies, little has been published analyzing their credibility.²⁵ Perhaps the most scholarly assessment was made by the literary historian, Roy Harvey Pearce. "The narrative of Indian captivity has long been recognized for

24 A former Comanche captive still lived in Refugio, Texas, during the boyhood of this writer in that community. Fifty years after her redemption the indentations caused by rawhide thongs used to bind her to the back of a wild pony during her captivity were visible.

25 One excellent resource is the catalogue of a list of books in the E. E. Ayer Collection of the Newberry Library, Chicago: Narratives of Captivity Among the Indians of North America. Publications of the Newberry Library, No. 3 (Chicago, 1912); Supplement I (Chicago, 1938).

its usefulness in the study of our history and, moreover, has even achieved a kind of literary status," he notes. But he traces their declining value for historical purposes from the first direct statements of frontier hardships as related by individuals who experienced them, through propagandist tracts intended to arouse hatred of French and Indians, to "penny dreadfuls" which included as much fiction as fact. By 1800 American readers were so doubtful of the truth of such accounts that redeemed captives considered it necessary to ask prominent citizens to testify to their veracity. The narratives lost influence as popular literature by the nineteenth century but retained interest to scholars as a reflection of American pioneer life. "The captivity narrative as a popular genre varies with the quality of the cultural milieu in which it was produced," Pearce concludes. And it is "interesting and valuable to us. . . not because it can tell us a great deal about the Indian or even about immediate frontier attitudes toward the Indians, but rather because it enables us to see more deeply and more clearly into popular American culture. . . ."26

In a ground breaking study of American frontier mythology, Richard Slotkin analyzes the changing motive

26 Roy Harvey Pearce, "The Significance of the Captivity Narrative," American Literature, XIX (1947-48), 1, 17-20.

of the captivity narrative. He regards the earliest narratives as "natural, spontaneous" reflections of the American wilderness environment. They began to lose force, however, in the hands of Puritan religious leaders who seized upon them as a means of keeping their congregations under control. Puritan ministers published revised editions of the narratives and turned them into religious tracts which lost much of the flavor and some of the factuality of the ordeals so simply and starkly recounted in the original narratives. Through this means, Slotkin states, they began to serve as "material for revival sermons, vehicles for political diatribes, and experimental evidence in philosophical and theological works." Although these so-called "improved" versions are much less useful to historians and ethnologists, they achieved great popularity which makes them valuable to students of sociology, literature, and mythology. If they describe Indian civilization inaccurately, they provide useful insights into the culture of the intended readers. Slotkin concludes that these revised narratives of captivity constitute the earliest "coherent myth-literature developed in America for American audiences."²⁷

The need for caution in the use of revised or "improved" versions of captivity narratives was emphasized

27 Slotkin, Regeneration Through Violence, 95.

recently by Richard Van Der Beets in a useful introduction to his compilation, Held Captive by Indians: Selected Narratives, 1642-1836. While noting that many redeemed captives were keen observers who provided valuable information about Indian wars, subsistence methods, and customs, he, too, stresses that as sources of American cultural history their utility is dependent in large measure upon the interests of the society for which the narratives were intended. The first accounts published by English colonists "are plain, factual and generally reliable religious documents which treat the salutary effects of the captivity as test, trial, or punishment by God; and, finally and most demonstrably, the captivity as evidence of Divine Providence and God's inscrutable wisdom." Puritan redeemed captives published their stories to provide guidance for readers who could profit from the morally uplifting messages to be found in their experiences.

After the outbreak of wars between the French and English colonies, Van Der Beets writes, the usefulness of captivity narrative as propaganda became increasingly evident. "The military, religious, and nationalistic considerations of both the French and Indian and the Revolutionary wars, then, find forceful expression in propagandistic narratives of Indian captivity and as such constitute another of their significant cultural impulses."

In the nineteenth century dramatic and stylistic devices frequently were used in a deliberate attempt to

stimulate sales, Van Der Beets asserts. Narratives originally published as factual and truthful experiences were "improved" in later editions until they "only slightly and speciously" resembled reports of actual captivities. These narratives lack the essential quality of genuine frontier experiences that are so starkly evident in earlier accounts of captivity.

In conclusion, Van Der Beets asserts that genuine narratives of captivity "touch upon fundamental truths. More than cultural indices or curiosities, the narratives of Indian captivity draw and shape their materials from the very wellsprings of human experience."²⁸

While Pearce, Slotkin, and Van Der Beets have analyzed captivity narratives as sources for understanding white culture, other scholars have either questioned or endorsed their value as records of the character and civilization of North American Indian tribes. Dwight L. Smith, who appraised the value of Shawnee captivity ethnography for ethnologists and historians, advises caution in their use. In the captivity narrative "the habits, customs, and ways of life of the Indian garnish the simple details of the account," he writes. "These things are of interest to the ethnologist and historian. In an objective appraisal, nevertheless, these items

²⁸ Van Der Beets, Held Captive by Indians, xiii-xxxi.

cannot be accepted at face value. The circumstances under which they were originally observed and the reasons for which they were written must be considered before they can be used totally or in part by ethnologists and historians." Smith concedes, however, that "studies of captivities are legitimate scholarly pursuits as the basis for the narratives was a common experience of hundreds of pioneers."²⁹

R. W. G. Vail acknowledges that the captive, like most frontiersmen, was prone to exaggerate, but he contends that narratives of captivity are "simple, vivid, direct and, generally, accurate pictures of the exciting and often harrowing adventures of their authors" which are "of importance to the historian and biographer, the ethnologist, the sociologist, the natural scientist, and the medical historian."³⁰

The Kentucky historian, Willard Rouse Jillson, has made extensive use of narratives of captivity. Noting that frontier literature is enhanced by hundreds of accounts of captivities, he states that many of them "are truthful and informative as to the life, practice, and philosophies of the American Indian."³¹

29 Dwight L. Smith, "Shawnee Captivity Ethnography," Ethnohistory, II (1955), 29-31, 37.

30 Vail, Voice of the Old Frontier, 27.

31 Willard Rouse Jillson, Indian Captivities of the Early West (Louisville: Society of Colonial Wars in the Commonwealth of Kentucky, 1953), 15.

Among leading historians who have written scholarly introductions to reprints of narratives of captivity are Walter Prescott Webb, Charles M. Andrews, and Milo M. Quaife. Nelson Lee's story contains some of the most amazing adventures of any narrative of its kind, but Webb thought his account authentic. "It is his account of life among the Indians that makes this book of unique value," Webb writes. "The story he tells is absorbing, but the information he conveys about how the Comanches lived before they were affected by the white man is invaluable."³²

Aside from Swanton, few United States ethnologists have voiced opinions on the usefulness of the captivity narrative. A distinguished Canadian scholar, Marius Barbeau, has devoted more attention to the subject than have his colleagues below the international boundary. He believes that the value of the captivity narrative "is enhanced by the candor of the observers who found themselves among the natives before the ancient customs had been abandoned, and the ethnographers had entered the field."³³

The narratives upon which this study is based have been selected whenever possible from those available in

³² Walter Prescott Webb, introduction to Nelson Lee, Three Years Among the Comanches (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1957), ix-x.

³³ Marius Barbeau, "Indian Captivities," American Philosophical Society Proceedings, XCIV (1950), 531.

scholarly editions, those listed in reputable bibliographies, and from those frequently cited by historians or ethnologists. While individual narratives may contain inaccuracies or exaggerations, taken in the aggregate they provide a generally reliable source of information about the assimilation of captives.

CHAPTER II

A CONTEST OF CIVILIZATION

Lewis H. Morgan, pioneer of American anthropology, has written that the institutions of all peoples emerged in savagery, developed in barbarism, and came to full fruition in civilization. As all humanity had a common origin, the development of various races has been similar, advancing at different rates but along identical courses in all regions until a corresponding degree of civilization was attained. He was convinced that American Indian history was representative of an earlier period of development among the ancestors of Europeans.¹

Morgan's views are shared by an anthropologist of Indian ancestry, Arthur C. Parker, who concedes that at the time of American colonization European ethnic culture was at a higher stage than that of the Amerinds. But Parker contends that this fact does not indicate a larger mental capacity. In his view it is faulty reasoning to relegate Indians to inferior status, for the relative standing of races is correctly evaluated on capability of advancement

¹ Lewis H. Morgan, Ancient Society (Chicago: C. H. Kerr Company, n.d.), vii.

rather than on the level of current cultural attainment. The Europeans had advanced more rapidly because of environmental advantages. The Indians could in favorable environments attain superior status within a few generations. He reminds his readers that "the Teuton and the Gaul were hairy savages delighting in devouring one another when other races now decadent enjoyed the acme of civilization."²

While the earliest European colonists of North America believed in the progress of civilized men, many of them thought that savage races had moved in the opposite direction. They were convinced that when races differed greatly in appearance they must be considered higher and lower forms of humanity. Such differences constituted proof of species corruption, for if God had designed the world to be peopled by an ideal kind of man, retreating from the ideal could occur only in terms of degeneration. Racial variations must represent progressive and degenerate replicas of the Creator's handiwork.³

The colonists' attitudes toward the Indians at first were more paternalistic than antagonistic. They

2 Arthur C. Parker, "Philosophy of Indian Education," Indian Historian, III (spring, summer 1970), 63. Reprint (originally published 1911).

3 Hayden White, "The Forms of Wildness: Archaeology of an Idea," in Edward Dudley and Maximillian Novak (eds.), The Wild Man Within (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1972), 9.

were confident that Indians would welcome European civilization after having had the opportunity to observe how vastly superior it was to their own. The natives must be provided with the benefits of Christianity, civilization, and order. This was one of the missions inherent in planting the colonies and it constituted a burden of the greatest magnitude. For the Indian would stand in the way of civilization as long as he was satisfied with his savage nature.⁴

It was inevitable that when Europeans landed in America with their sense of mission and convictions of white superiority⁵ clashes with the native races would ensue. Yet in the typical initial contact between North American Indians and Europeans the natives were hospitable and helpful.⁶ As long as the prime European objective was trade, relations between the races remained amicable. But from the establishment of Jamestown onward, English settlements were planned as permanent communities which would

4 Roy Harvey Pearce, The Savages of America (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1965), 6.

5 For an understanding of the views on Indian savagery of Europeans considering migration to America see William Bradford's History of Plimoth Plantation (Boston: Wright & Potter Printing Company, 1899), 32-34. A sermon warning Englishmen preparing to leave for America against marrying Indians is quoted in Arthur W. Calhoun, A Social History of the American Family (Cleveland: Arthur H. Clark Company, 1917), I, 322.

6 John Collier, The Indians of America (New York: W. W. Norton, 1947), 190-98.

intrude increasingly into the Indian domain. This change in English intention gradually reversed the nature of Indian-white contacts. Indian esteem for the English eroded while the colonists no longer concealed their contempt for native civilization.⁷

It is clear in retrospect that the two cultures could not mesh. European individualism and emphasis on private property were incomprehensible to the Indian, while the communal life style of the native American was anathema to the newcomers from across the Atlantic. As Wilcomb E. Washburn observes, "when such diverse peoples struggled for the same land base, the loser might retain his physical existence but almost invariably he lost the culture and the land that gave his life meaning."⁸ As captive taking was an important element in the conflict, it may be helpful to analyze attitudes toward basic cultural differences to determine whether they influenced assimilation.

The early English colonists were imbued with the idea of the importance of order in the universe. They believed that progress would elevate civilized men who, in

7 Gary B. Nash, "The Image of the Indian in the Southern Colonial Mind," in The White Man Within, 60-63.

8 Wilcomb E. Washburn, The Indian and the White Man (New York: New York University Press, 1964), xii.

accordance with God's plan, would establish order in chaos such as existed in America. Like the forest and the wild beasts, the native Americans were a part of that chaos. In order to civilize the New World it would be necessary to teach their own cultural values to the natives.⁹

Within a few years the dominant paternalistic attitude gave way to ambivalence. A dual image developed in which colonists observed the Indian on the one hand as a savage, sub-human, unreasoning race, and on the other as a generous, innocent, childlike people, free of many of the vices which had been so commonly seen on the other side of the Atlantic.¹⁰ In the French colonies, far more than in the English, the favorable view took hold, largely as the result of the influence of the Jesuit fathers who described the Indians as nature's noblemen, inferior only in their ignorance of Christ's teaching, a shortcoming which could be remedied through missionary zeal.¹¹

A dramatic change in English attitudes toward Indians occurred in 1622 with the uprising of the tribes

9 Pearce, The Savages of America, 3-4. For an expression of amazement over the refusal of the Indians to welcome European civilization see Cotton Mather, India Christiana (Boston: Printed by B. Green, 1721), 55.

10 Nash, "The Image of the Indian in the Southern Colonial Mind," 56-57.

11 Geoffrey Symcox, "The Wild Man's Return," in Edward Dudley and Maximillian Novak (eds.), The Wild Man Within, 226-27.

against Virginia. Instantly the darker view gained the ascendancy and the colonists branded all Indians as treacherous savages. No longer feeling an obligation to civilize them, they deemed the Indians to have forfeited their rights. The destruction of the tribes could be countenanced with little soul-searching, for the red races now were regarded as irredeemable savages rather than natural men with an interesting, though inferior, culture.¹²

In justifying the acquisition of Indian lands some whites charged that the savages were devils to be exterminated while others held that they were heathen who could benefit by trading their lands for Christian teaching.¹³ There was no question of "the right of followers of the true Jehovah to take by force the lands of the Cananites."¹⁴ If further justification were needed, the colonists could cite Vattel's Law of Nations which held that industrious nations in need of space for burgeoning populations rightfully could confiscate lands of hunting peoples who were not using them efficiently. This theory was reinforced by the teachings of John Locke that private

¹² Nash, "The Image of the Indian in the Southern Colonial Mind," 69-72.

¹³ Louis B. Wright, The Atlantic Frontier (New York: A. A. Knopf, 1951), 124.

¹⁴ Louis B. Wright, Religion and Empire (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1943), 157.

property was the basis of civilization. Disregarding the fact that the Indians thus far encountered were as much farmers as hunters, the colonists decreed that they were wastrels who must give way to a higher form of civilization.¹⁵

In New England the early relationships between Puritans and Indians resembled those in the southern colonies in many respects. Although the Puritans were more averse to Indian institutions than were the Virginians, there did develop bonds of sympathy based in part on gratitude for the generosity of the natives during the first hard years of settlement. Many Puritans believed that the Indians actually were white people descended from the ten lost tribes of Israel and dark skinned only because of exposure to the sun. The tribes, like the Irish, were misled by the Devil, and it was the plain duty of the Puritans to help them find their way back to God.¹⁶ However, the Puritans did not permit this duty to prevent them from maintaining sharp racial distinctions in their day to day relations with the Indians. Theodore Parker, Unitarian minister and humanitarian, comments that the "Puritan hoped

15 Pearce, The Savages of America, 66-71.

16 Alden T. Vaughan, New England Frontier (Boston: Little Brown, 1965), viii.

to meet the Pequods in heaven, but wished to keep apart from them on earth, nay, to exterminate them from the land."¹⁷

Richard Slotkin asserts that the aversion was more apparent than real. The Puritans sensed and covertly desired the easy-going life style of the native American, the manner in which his environment served him, his uncomplicated and naturalistic approach to religion, and the mental and physical well-being that his worship offered him. In return, Slotkin surmises, the Indian both feared and desired the technological skills of the white man. "Each culture viewed the other with mixed feelings of attraction and repulsion, sympathy and antipathy,"¹⁸

Again, however, the onset of war brought a change in attitudes. During the massive raids of King William's War the French and Indians carried more white women and children into captivity than were seized in all previous wars combined. This catastrophe forced the Puritans to re-examine their vision of the city on a hill. In departing from their fellow Puritans in Europe they had incurred criticism which created feelings of guilt and

¹⁷ Quoted in Louis Ruchames, Racial Thought in America, I, (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1969), 10.

¹⁸ Slotkin, Regeneration Through Violence, 26.

caused them to cling to English customs as a psychological necessity.¹⁹ They viewed with alarm the temptations confronting their captive kinsmen. Would their Puritan faith and English upbringing be strong enough to offset the "freedom of impulse and action" which was inherent in Indian civilization? The Puritans saw in the loss of their women and children a parody on their departure from Europe 60 years earlier. In the Indian village they saw the "antithesis of a city on a hill." Thus the recurring raids and captivities represented "retribution for their own departure from sanctity and society." The captivities of their loved ones seemed to mean that their nightmares were coming true.²⁰

As the tribes along the Atlantic seaboard were gradually driven westward by the expanding English colonies, the image of the Indians began to change once more, at least to reflective men comfortably removed from the dangers of the frontier. Educated easterners restored the Indians to the status of cultural entities, and during the early eighteenth century men such as missionaries and colonial officials who had known the red men at first hand

19 For an account of soul-searching by John Winthrop regarding this matter see Edmund S. Morgan, The Puritan Dilemma (Boston: Little, Brown, 1958), xli, 40-51.

20 Slotkin, Regeneration Through Violence, 120-22.

published anthropological studies which analyzed interesting aspects of tribal culture.²¹

Early in the eighteenth century it became increasingly evident to students of Indian culture that contacts with whites demoralized rather than civilized the tribes. They observed that the virtues as well as the vices of white civilization made a shambles of the admirable traits of Indian culture.²² It is ironic that at the very time that scholars regained an appreciation of Indian civilization the traits of the native Americans which elicited admiration were deteriorating as a result of perversion by whites. Demoralized by whiskey and disease, the eastern Indians became increasingly dependent upon white traders and abandoned the cultural traits which intrigued scholarly observers. The liquor sold by the traders introduced drunkenness among the Indians while land speculators taught them covetousness. The most disorderly members of American society gravitated to the frontier. It is not surprising that they caused the Indians "to suspect the superiority of white Christian culture to which they were incessantly urged to aspire." For their part,

21 Nash, "The Image of the Indian in the Southern Colonial Mind," 73.

22 Pearce, The Savages of America, 41. For an enlightening account of the effect of white trade goods on Indian civilization see Bernard De Voto, The Course of Empire (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1952), 92.

the frontiersmen found little to admire in the deteriorating Indian culture. "For the Indian the limited respect of European colonizers had come too late to halt the process of cultural change which would have left his image impaired and his power to resist further cultural and territorial aggrandizement fatally weakened."²³

During the French and Indian War and the Revolution, the Americans suffered greatly at the hands of Indians allied with European nations. On the frontiers hatred of all Indians intensified, and from that time until the tribes no longer posed a threat to their region most whites regarded them as no better than wild animals to be hunted down or destroyed wherever encountered. Illustrative of these sentiments are the remarks of soldiers and settlers who knew the Indians intimately:

The Indians have seventeen prisoners; they have already knocked several of them on the head. The cruelties and the insolence of these barbarians is horrible, their souls are as black as pitch. It is an abominable way to make war; the retaliation is frightening, and the air one breathes here is contagious [sic] of making one accustomed to callousness -- Louis Antoine de Bougainville (French Army officer), 1756.²⁴

²³ Nash, "The Image of the Indian in the Southern Colonial Mind," 78-79.

²⁴ Adventures in the Wilderness (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1964), 41. Bougainville was a keen student of native cultures. He was the discoverer of Tahiti and the first Frenchman to circumnavigate the earth. As General Montcalm's aide-de-camp he had continuous contact with the natives during the French and Indian War.

One of the principal objects of my attention, whilst I lived among the Indians, was the humiliating condition of their women. Here the female sex, instead of polishing and improving the rough manners of the men, are equally ferocious, cruel, and obdurate. Instead of that benevolent disposition and warm sensibility to the sufferings of others, which marks their characters in more civilized climes, they quaff with extatic [sic] pleasure the blood of the innocent prisoner, writhing with agony under the inhuman torments inflicted upon him-- whilst his convulsive groans speak music to their souls. --Mary Kinnan (redeemed captive), 1794.²⁵

The writings of the earlier western historians reflect the attitudes of the frontier whites. Theodore Roosevelt, although he recognized great diversity among the cultures of various tribes, believed that Indians were so inherently cruel that in the crudest of white societies a man would be lynched for offenses which even the children committed in Indian villages:

Not only were the Indians very terrible in battle but they were cruel beyond all belief in victory; and the gloomy annals of border warfare are stained with their darkest hues because it was a war in which helpless women and children suffered the same hideous fate that so often befell their husbands and fathers. It was a war waged by savages against armed settlers, whose families followed them into the wilderness. Such a war is inevitably bloody and cruel; but the inhuman love of cruelty for cruelty's sake, which marks the red Indian above all other savages, rendered these wars more terrible than any others. For the hideous, unnamable, unthinkable tortures practiced by the red

25 True Narrative of the Sufferings of Mary Kinnan, Who Was Taken Prisoner by the Shawnee Nation of Indians on the Thirteenth Day of May, 1791, and Remained with Them Till the Sixteenth of August, 1794 (Elizabethtown: Printed by S. Kollock, 1795), 8-9.

men on their captured foes, and on their foes' tender women and helpless children, were such as we read of in no other struggle. . . . It was inevitable--indeed it was in many instances proper--that such deeds should awake in the breasts of the whites the grimmest wildest spirit of revenge and hatred.²⁶

As the white settlers completed occupation of the eastern woodlands and began to push onto the Great Plains, they encountered in the red man a formidable mounted enemy. The Plains Indian's way of life centered around warfare and his subsistence depended largely upon pursuit of the buffalo. The warrior societies were determined to defend at whatever cost the lands over which they roamed. The pioneers who wanted these lands were little concerned with the red man's philosophy or cultural traits.²⁷ A few of the more forthright openly admitted that they were occupying Indian lands because they were powerful enough to take them. But the majority justified their actions on

26 Theodore Roosevelt, The Winning of the West (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1889), I, 100-101. This is in sharp contrast to the remarks of another President, John F. Kennedy, who wrote in an introduction to The American Heritage Book of Indians that only through study of the heroic past of the American Indians "can we as a nation do what must be done if our treatment of the American Indian is not to be marked down for all time as a national disgrace." American Heritage Book of Indians (New York, American Heritage Publishing Co., 1961), 7.

27 Walter Prescott Webb, The Great Plains (Boston: Ginn and Company, 1931), 58.

the ground that the murdering red devils deserved their fate.²⁸

In the 1850's more white men wished to cross the Plains on the way to the Pacific Coast than to settle on the buffalo range. These travelers entertained a wide variety of opinions and misconceptions about Plains Indians. Some considered them to possess the natural innocence of children, a notion which meshed with their ideas of innate white superiority. Others derided this idea, contending that Indians were "subject to temptation like other men." Travelers who saw Indians hanging around the forts begging for whiskey regarded them more as worthless degenerates than as noble savages.²⁹

Before the Civil War, a movement began among both enemies and friends of the Indian to remove him from contact with whites. The motives of most frontiersmen were obvious. They wanted to settle on western lands without having to endure the threat of Indian attack. For eastern humanitarians, removal was a means of protecting the Indian from contact with rougher white elements until he could be taught to cope with civilized life. The Indian

28 Walter S. Campbell, "The Plains Indian in Literature and Life," in James F. Wilard and Colin B. Goodykoontz (eds.), The Trans-Mississippi West (Boulder: University of Colorado, 1930), 186.

29 Ibid., 182-85.

must be compelled to give up his stubborn preference for his own way of life and to accept assimilation for his own preservation. Disregarding striking evidence to the contrary, they thought that acculturation, "throwing off one way of life for another," could occur rapidly and easily. Following the theories of John Locke, they believed that private property, conceived in terms of an agrarian society, was the means to social maturity. To gain civilization the Indian merely must become a landowner and a farmer. This could be achieved through education in a generation or two.³⁰ John Daniel Hammerer advocated the teaching of agriculture and useful arts as early as 1730.³¹ More than a century later, Randolph B. Marcy, a United States cavalry officer, made the same suggestion. The Indians "have been despoiled, supplanted, and robbed of their just and legitimate heritage, by the avaricious and rapid encroachment of the white man," he acknowledges.

30 Pearce, The Savages of America, 47-49, 66-68. But this optimistic view was questioned by some humanitarians who began to fear that the Indian race was doomed to extinction. Theodore Parker expressed this belief in an address delivered before the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Convention on January 29, 1858: "Our fathers tried to enslave the ferocious and unprogressive Indian. He would not work--he would fight. He would not be enslaved--he could not help being killed. The Indian will perish utterly and soon." (As quoted in Ruchames, Racial Thought in America, I, 370.)

31 John Daniel Hammerer, An Account of a Plan for Civilizing the North American Indians (Brooklyn: Historical Printing Club, 1890), 9-10.

"It is not at this late date in our power to atone for all the injustice inflicted upon the red men; but it seems to me that a wise policy would dictate almost the only recompense it is now in our power to make--that of introducing among them the light of Christianity and the blessings of civilization, with their attendant benefits of agriculture and the arts."³²

As friends of the Indian were so thoroughly convinced of the superiority of their civilization it did not occur to them to consider the wishes of the Indian. They sought to solve the Indian problem by doing away with identifiable Indian traits. Francis Paul Prucha comments that "with an ethnocentrism of frightening intensity, they resolved to do away with Indianness and to preserve only the manhood of the individual Indian." The Indian problem would be solved by destroying the tribal structures and completely assimilating the individual. Civilization must be forced on the Indians if they attempted to resist. "The communal. . . patterns of the Indians were an affront to their sensibilities. Unless the Indian could be trained to be selfish, they felt there was little hope of assimilating him."³³ The slogan of the founder of the Indian

32 Randolph B. Marcy, Exploration of the Red River of Louisiana (Washington: A. O. P. Nicholson, Public Printer, 1854), 108.

33 Francis Paul Prucha (ed.), Americanizing the American Indian (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), 1-8.

school at Carlisle Institute, Captain Richard Pratt, was "Kill the Indian and save the man." Pratt, who was such a sincere friend of the Indian that he was called "the red man's Moses," saw nothing worth saving in Indian culture.³⁴

While a majority of white Americans agreed that the Indian must accept assimilation as the only alternative to extinction, a significant minority, including some frontiersmen and some intellectuals, admired the Indian way of life. Even among the more adventurous of the earliest European colonists the wild, free life of the native American exerted an attraction which they found difficult to resist. Richard Slotkin finds in the reaction to the Puritan ethos the seeds of rebellion which could make Indian life attractive. While Puritans viewed the Indian village as "the antithesis of the city on the hill," he calls attention to "certain fundamental affinities between them." Many traits of the Indian life style "were characterized by the overt expression of basic human desires and states of mind that Christianity had long suppressed and concealed beneath an elaborate scrollwork of conventional symbols and complex mores." The European attitude toward Indian sexual freedom, for instance, reinforced by racial prejudices, caused Puritans "to view

34 Elaine Goodale Eastman, Pratt, the Red Man's Moses (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1935), 188-89, 196.

the prospect of marrying an Indian or bearing Indian children with horror and revulsion. Yet mingled with the horror and revulsion was the recognition that the Indian practice was somehow 'natural' and that all men, if left to their own devices, would soon succumb to its logic and attractiveness," Slotkin asserts.

Slotkin sees in this "logic of rebellion" a powerful inducement to the Indianization of Puritan captives. "To the young captives, the freedom of impulse, action, and sexual expression that Indian society offered might have been enough in themselves to tempt them to remain," he speculates. An even more compelling inducement was the difference the captive Puritans observed in the treatment of those prisoners who had been adopted into the tribe from others who lived in perpetual slavery. Under such circumstances it is not difficult to understand why "many captives succumbed, if only temporarily, to the lure of the wigwam." Female captives were invited to marry warriors who would provide them food and lodging. Boys could enjoy the thrills of the chase and, eventually, the warpath, and as adopted sons of chiefs, they could look forward to places of importance in the tribe.³⁵

Benjamin Franklin was among the few white men of his time who understood the Indian-white relationship as a

35 Slotkin, Regeneration Through Violence, 123-24.

contest of civilizations. In a letter to a friend, Franklin commented on the peculiar hold that Indian life retained over whites who had experienced captivity

. . . proneness of human nature to a life of ease, of freedom, from care and labour appears strongly in the little success that has hitherto attended every attempt to civilize our American Indians, in their present way of living, almost all their wants are supplied by the spontaneous Productions of Nature, with the addition of very little labour, if hunting and fishing may indeed be called labour when Game is so plenty, they visit us frequently, and see the advantages that Arts, Sciences, and compact Society procure us, they are not deficient in natural understanding and yet they have never shown any Inclination to change their manner of life for ours, or to learn any of our Arts; When an Indian Child has been brought up among us, taught our language and habituated to our Customs, yet if he goes to see his relations and make one Indian Ramble with them there is no persuading him ever to return, and that this is not natural merely as Indians, but as men, is plain from this, that when white persons of either sex have been taken prisoner young by the Indians, and lived awhile among them, tho' ransomed by their Friends, and treated with all imaginable tenderness to prevail with them to stay among the English, yet in a Short time they become disgusted with our manner of life, and the care and pains that are necessary to support it, and take the first opportunity of escaping again into the Woods, from whence there is no reclaiming them. One instance I remember to have heard, where the person was to be brought home to possess a good Estate; but finding some care necessary to keep it together, he relinquished it to a younger brother, reserving to himself nothing but a gun and match-Coat, with which he took his way again to the Wilderness.³⁶

36 Benjamin Franklin to Peter Collinson, May 9, 1753, Leonard W. Labaree, (ed.), The Papers of Benjamin Franklin (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961), IV, 481-83.

Few redeemed white captives extolled the superiority of the Indian life style (although many voluntarily returned to it), but a youth who did was James Willard Schultz, a talented writer who chose to live his life as an Indian. Schultz, as an 18-year-old member of a prominent New York family, was preparing to enter West Point in 1877 when he went to Montana for a summer's buffalo hunting. He developed an affection for the wild, free life, married a Blackfoot maiden, and remained with the Indians until after they were driven onto the reservation:

Alas! Alas! Why could not this simple life have continued? Why must the . . . swarms of settlers have invaded that wonderful land, and robbed its lords of all that made life worth living? They knew not care, nor hunger, nor want of any kind. From my window here I hear the roar of the great city, and see the crowds hurrying by. . . 'bound to the wheel.' and there is no escape from it except by death. And this is civilization! I, for one, maintain that there is no . . . happiness in it. The Indians of the plains. . . alone knew what was perfect content and happiness, and that, we are told, is the chief end and aim of men - to be free from want, and worry, and care. Civilization will never furnish it, except to the very, very few.³⁷

A. Irving Hallowell has pointed out that there were "cases where historical circumstances combined with unusual personality characteristics" to enable individuals to "feel simultaneous loyalty to both Indian and white institutions." Two prominent men of this class were

37 J. W. Schultz, My Life as an Indian (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1935), 46.

Sir William Johnson and George Croghan, both of whom acquired tremendous influence over the Iroquois and their neighboring tribes. Johnson was able to conduct a complex diplomatic mission in the morning, join so wholeheartedly in an Indian war dance in the afternoon that "his mind was washed clean of every European thing," and resume his diplomatic duties a few hours later as if there had been no interruption. He and Croghan have been called the most powerful white Indians in America.³⁸

One of the most enthusiastic endorsements ever given to Indian civilization by a white man was that of Rufus Sage who went among the western Indians before their cultural traits had been greatly modified by white contacts. He declared that the Indian:

has a heart instinctive of more genuine good feeling than his white neighbor - a soul of more firm integrity - a spirit of more unyielding independence. Place the white man in his condition, divested of all the restraints of law, and unacquainted with the learning and arts of civilized life - surrounded by all the associations of a savage state, and the Indian, by comparison, will then exhibit, in a more striking light, that innate superiority he in reality possesses.³⁹

Among the famous figures of American history who have praised the freedom, instinctive generosity, and

38 Hallowell, "American Indians, White and Black," 523.

39 Rufus Sage, Western Scenes and Adventure (Philadelphia: G. D. Miller, 1855), 86, as quoted in Pearce, Savages of America, 110.

innate moral principles of the Indian were Thomas Paine, Henry David Thoreau, William Bartram, and Sam Houston. Paine points to the absence of poverty in Indian society as proof that it is a product of civilized life: "There is not" among the Indians "any of the spectacles of human misery which poverty and want present to our eyes in all the towns and streets in Europe." Thoreau writes that the Indian "stands free and unconstrained in nature," while the white man "finds himself constrained and oppressed" in his own house.⁴⁰ Bartram, whose travels led him into intimate contact with the southern tribes, believed that the Indians' high moral principles are innate. "These people," he observed, "are both well-tutored and civil. It is from the most delicate sense of the honour and reputation of their tribes and families, that their laws and customs receive their force and energy. This is the divine principle which influences their moral conduct, and solely preserves their constitution and civil government in that purity in which they are found to prevail amongst them."⁴¹ Houston, who three times abandoned white civilization to live with the Indians (once after resigning the governorship of Tennessee), has depicted the delights of the

40 As quoted in Pearce, Savages of America, 149, 153.

41 William Bartram, The Travels of William Bartram (N.p.: Macy-Masius, 1928), 45-46.

Cherokee camp as "the moulding period of life ... when every idea of gratification fires the blood and flashes on the fancy.... The poets of Europe ... have borrowed their sweetest images from the wild idolatry of the Indian maiden."⁴²

The delights of the company of Indian maidens ranks among the most significant but seldom analyzed factors in attracting men to the frontier. This attraction is noted in the journals of fur traders and mountain men. Whenever Europeans came in close contact with exotic races, their first impulse was to fight the men and cohabit with the women. In North America the fighting and cohabiting prevailed until the Indian nations were no longer powerful enough to pose a threat or mysterious enough to arouse interest.⁴³

While American history abounds with the writings of whites on the contest of Indian and white civilizations, comparatively little has been recorded on the subject by Indians. It is obvious, however, from the orations of Indians at conferences with whites that they considered their way of life superior. One such encounter was described by Benjamin Franklin:

⁴² Marquis James, The Raven (Garden City, New York: Blue Ribbon Books, 1929), 22.

⁴³ Walter O'Meara, Daughters of the Country (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1968), 16.

The little value Indians set on what we prize so highly under the name of Learning appears from a pleasant passage that happened some years since at a Treaty between one of our Colonies and the Six Nations; when everything had been settled to the Satisfaction of both sides, and nothing remained but a mutual exchange of civilities, the English Commissioners told the Indians, they had in their Country a College for the instruction of Youth who were taught various languages, Arts, and Sciences; that there was a particular foundation in favour of the Indians to defray the expense of the Education of any of their sons who should desire to take the Benefit of it. And now if the Indians would accept of the offer, the English would take a dozen of their brightest lads and bring them up in the Best manner; The Indians after consulting on the proposal replied that it was remembered some of their Youths had been formerly educated in that College, but it had been observed that for a long time after they returned to their Friends, they were absolutely good for nothing being neither acquainted with the true methods of killing deer, catching Beaver or surprising an enemy. The Proposition however, they looked on as a mark of kindness and good will of the English to the Indian Nations which merited a grateful return; and therefore if the English Gentlemen would send a dozen or two of their Children to Onondago the great Council would take care of their Education, bring them up in really what was the best manner and make men of them.⁴⁴

The Indians considered themselves to be "a chosen people" while they believed that the diversity of hair, eyes, and facial features of the whites proved them to be "a mongrel race." And while assessing character the Indians felt vastly superior. They needed no Bible to

44 Benjamin Franklin to Peter Collinson, May 9, 1753, Papers of Benjamin Franklin, IV, 481-83.

teach them right from wrong, for the natural order of their way of life assured them of acquiring the virtues of bravery, hospitality and integrity.⁴⁵

Arthur C. Parker points out that European culture brought to the Indian evidence of the whites' great power based on technological achievement. Ships and firearms staggered the natives at first sight with knowledge of their own weakness. The Indians desired the power represented by these technological achievements, but they did not welcome all aspects of European culture. In fact, some elements of European society repelled them.⁴⁶

At a debate held at Cayuga Academy in 1845, Ely S. Parker, later to become an Iroquois chief, an engineer, a general in the Union Army, and United States Commissioner of Indian Affairs, asserted that Indians contemplated a hereafter where "the avarice of the white man will never reach them." There they would be able once more to live in their natural manner which consists of "bravery, friendship or hatred, universal benevolence and hospitality and a strict adherence to truth and duty. . . ."

Why, then, his opponent asked, did he attend a school run by whites?

⁴⁵ Randolph C. Downes, Council Fires on the Upper Ohio (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press), 5-7.

⁴⁶ Arthur C. Parker, "Philosophy of Indian Education," 63.

Parker countered that white people claimed their civilization produced happier lives than the Indians enjoyed. He had come to Cayuga Academy to learn whether they spoke the truth. If he failed to find the happiness which was said to exist "in the cultivation of the liberal arts and sciences and powers of the mind" he would "resume the blanket, the . . . bow and arrow, the tomahawk and scalping knife and resume savage life. . . ."47

Similar sentiments were expressed by Charles A. Eastman, a Sioux who abandoned the life of a young warrior to attend school. He eventually married a white woman and became a doctor and writer but, like young Ely Parker, he saw much in the Indian life style which was lacking in white civilization:

When nature is at her best and provides abundantly for the savage, it seems to me that no life is happier than his! Food is free--lodging free--everything free! All were alike rich in the summer, and again, all were alike poor in the winter The Indian boy enjoyed such a life as almost all boys dream of and would choose for themselves if they were permitted to do so.⁴⁸

Eastman clearly perceived that the Indian could not compete in a world controlled by advanced technology.

47 Ely S. Parker, address delivered at Cayuga Academy, November 18, 1845, Parker Collection (American Philosophical Society Library, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania). A large volume of correspondence relating to the education of various members of the Parker family is contained in this collection.

48 Charles A. Eastman, Indian Boyhood (Boston: Little, Brown, 1937), 16-18.

He dedicated himself to leading his people to accept white civilization. But after many disillusioning experiences with corrupt officials, he found little to praise in their way of life:

Why do we find so much evil and wickedness practiced by the nations composed of professedly "Christian" individuals? The pages of history are full of licensed murder and the plundering of weaker and less developed peoples, and obviously the world today has not outgrown this system. Behind the material and intellectual splendor of...civilization, primitive savagery and cruelty and lust hold sway The dollar is the measure of value and might still spells right....⁴⁹

Indians believed that Europeans were lacking in bravery, dignity, and honor. White men devoted their lives to the pursuit of material wealth. They would dishonor themselves to obtain it, even to the point of laboring for others. Cowardly in war, they avoided battle unless they had overwhelming superiority in numbers, and they had no regard for the test of individual manhood exhibited by counting coup on an enemy. Moreover, the physical appearance of the white man revolted the Indian. His very color revealed a sickly constitution, and he neglected to practice the purificatory rites which might have enabled him to shake loose from the debilitating diseases he carried wherever he went to infect the unfortunate Indians

⁴⁹ Charles A. Eastman, From the Deep Woods to Civilization (Boston: Little, Brown, 1916), 194.

upon whom he breathed. He shrank like a weakling from tests which proved manhood. "He was a coward who screamed like a woman when burned."⁵⁰

The one characteristic of Europeans which infuriated Indians most was their obsession to possess land. The Indian believed that the earth was intended to provide support for everyone. It was beyond their understanding that anyone should presume to claim individual possession of a tract of land. To see the game depleted and the forests destroyed was enraging enough, but to see the white man fence off private property "struck at the heart of the Indian's conception of man's ordained place on earth." The Indian was satisfied with every facet of his own way of life. He was quite willing to die to preserve it.⁵¹

⁵⁰ Van Every, Forth to the Wilderness, 37-42. An article in an American medical journal gives an interesting theory on the extra-ordinary physical prowess which was shared by Indians and their white captives. They performed remarkable feats of strength and endurance, survived terrible wounds and prolonged periods of starvation, and withstood pain far more courageously than a civilized white man could to. The fact that captive white children developed these same characteristics proved that heredity had not bestowed these powers on the Indians. The author attributes them, rather, to natural selection. Indian life was rigorous and only those white children who could survive the same hardships as Indian children lived to adulthood. He concludes that a child of any race brought up in this manner would show the same biological peculiarities. Edwin H. Ackernecht, "White Indians," 34.

⁵¹ Van Every, Forth to the Wilderness, 37-42.

A present day Indian activist and scholar, George Manuel, is one of the men of his race most recently to reassert the conviction that red people had as much to give as to receive in the acculturation process between Amerinds and Europeans.⁵² In his book, The Fourth World (written with Michael Polsuns), he includes an interesting, if argumentative, analysis of the contest of civilizations. Noting that initial relationships between European colonists and native peoples stimulated instant flowering for both cultures, he asserts that a mutual dependence developed which ameliorated problems and maintained peace.

In early relationships neither culture dominated the other. Trade benefited both races and each civilization offered new insights which would assist the other. But of the two, in Manuel's view, the contributions of the Indians were of much greater benefit to mankind. These contributions centered around the necessities of life-- food, clothing, housing, and medicine. These were precisely what the newcomers needed most, for a tenth of all Europeans were afflicted by some disability as a result of

⁵² Manuel grew up in British Columbia, living with his grandfather who was a Shuswap medicine man. His contacts with whites were few until he was compelled to attend a missionary boarding school, thus experiencing both civilizations before growing to manhood. He became chief of his band, Chairman of the National Indian Advisory Council, President of the North American Indian Brotherhood, and President of the National Indian Brotherhood of Canada.

poor nutrition. In return, the European technologies assisted both races to make better use of the Indian contributions.

"What is important," Manuel contends, "is creativity, imagination, and humanity." The list of Indian innovations, as opposed to those of whites, is revealing of a wide gulf in cultural values. The inventions of Europeans that retain major importance are related to war-making capabilities, while Indian contributions to technological development have addressed themselves to providing for the necessities of human survival.

In reviewing the clash of European and Indian civilizations, Manuel observes that his people could not withstand the economically motivated surge of the "acquisitive society religiously committed to possessive individualism." Unlike the Indians near the Atlantic and Pacific Coasts, the Plains Indians did not experience an era of mutual dependence with the westering whites. By the time the frontiersmen pushed onto the Plains the Indians had become an inconvenience. Manifest Destiny dictated their eradication. They possessed nothing of value except their land, and failure to use it for productive purposes deprived them of the right to retain it. "By this time, extermination through massacre and the deliberate spreading of disease had become institutionalized

as the standard way in which European powers sought to relate to Indian peoples," he charges.⁵³

In justifying their seizure of Indian lands, Manuel relates, the invaders charged that the tribes were warlike savages who lacked respect for human life. How, he wonders, did this differ from the motivations of European nations that made warfare the prevailing way of life? A double standard permitted the European to label Indian customs "savage, evil, primitive, or otherwise unacceptable" while regarding their own aggressions as carrying out the will of God.⁵⁴

While the views of Indian men can be ascertained from orations, the women of the tribes had no such means of making their opinions known to whites during frontier times and, although hundreds of Indian women lived with white traders and trappers "according to the custom of the country," few have recorded their impressions of white civilization. But at least one by her actions has provided proof of her preference for the way of life of her own people. Medicine Snake Woman, sister of a chief of the Blood nation, married the wealthy American Fur Company official, Alexander Culbertson. A beautiful girl of 15,

⁵³ George Manuel and Michael Posluns, The Fourth World (Don Mills, Ont.: Collier-Macmillan, 1974), 6-19.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 252-53.

she immediately became a great business asset to the company, accompanying Culbertson on visits to remote Indian villages and winning the warlike Blackfoot tribe over to trade and peaceful relations. In 25 years she bore Culbertson five children and served as a fitting hostess at social events around Fort Union.

In 1858 Culbertson retired from the Indian trade, moved east to Illinois, and constructed a mansion. There Medicine Snake Woman, clad in the finest gowns imported from Europe, entertained distinguished visitors from East and West, "mistress of all the manners and graces of civilized life." But each autumn she indulged in a partial return to her Indian culture. She moved out of the mansion and pitched a tipi on the front lawn where she lived until the onset of winter. After ten years, Culbertson lost his fortune and they returned to the West. There Medicine Snake Woman abandoned civilization completely and returned to her own people. She died on the Blood Reservation at the age of 70.⁵⁵

Has this contest between civilizations relevance to a study of assimilation of captives? Yes, in the sense that it suggests a primary reason that individuals of both races who experienced both civilizations so frequently preferred the Indian life style. It would appear that Indian

55 O'Meara, Daughters of the Country, 294-99.

family life offered much to the fulfillment of the individual which was lacking in the more advanced civilization. Charles A. Eastman believes that Indians' "love for one another is stronger than that of any civilized people."⁵⁶ Thomas Wildcat Alford, a Shawnee who attended boarding school, asserts that "Indian parents felt their responsibility keenly and paid more attention to training their children than does the civilized white family."⁵⁷

And the evidence presented in narratives of captivity strongly suggests that Indians loved their adopted white children with an instinctive openness that would be difficult for white parents to exceed. This quality was discerned by a few white scholars, including J. Hector St. John de Crevecoeur. He calls attention in Letters From an American Farmer to the fact that many parents visited the Indian towns at the conclusions of wars to reclaim their children who were held in captivity. "To their inexpressible sorrow, they found them so completely Indianized, that many knew them no longer, and those whose more advanced ages permitted them to recollect their fathers and mothers, absolutely refused to follow them, and ran to their adopted parents for protection against

56 Eastman, From the Deep Woods to Civilization, 6.

57 Thomas Wildcat Alford, Civilization (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1936), 18-21.

the effusions of love their unhappy real parents lavished upon them!" Crevecoeur concedes that the Indians must possess a "social bond singularly captivating, and far superior to anything to be boasted of among us."⁵⁸

Nowhere, perhaps, is this quality better illustrated than in the account given by Thomas Wildcat Alford of the experience of his great grandmother, a white captive of the Shawnees: "The Scouts brought the baby to the chief's wife, who was childless. She loved the little white girl very dearly, and cared for her as tenderly as she knew how to do. The child grew and played happily with the Indian children." When the girl was 14 she, along with numerous other captives, was given up under terms of a treaty. "But she loved the Indians and their wild, free way of living, and pined for her foster mother so much that she was very unhappy when separated from her." Seizing the first opportunity to escape, she made her way across a trackless wilderness to rejoin the tribe.

"In the meantime the girl's foster mother, the wife of the Indian chief, had grieved so deeply over the loss of her daughter that it was thought she would not live. She refused to eat food, and pined away. Finally she was no longer able to go about, but lay on her bed in an

⁵⁸ Hector St. John de Crevecoeur, Letters From an American Farmer (New York: Dutton, 1957), 208-209.

exhausted conditon, seemingly waiting for her life to leave her body. . . ." Then, suddenly, "the young girl approached, and they were clasped in each other's arms. . . . The foster mother was no longer ill; she rapidly regained her strength, and lived to an old age." The girl eventually married an Indian and bore him eight children.⁵⁹

Here, then, is one factor fascilitating the assimilation of white captives. Taken at an impressionable age and cherished by Indian adopted parents, it is understandable that many of them lost the desire to return to the grinding toil of a white family on the frontier.

A second factor, closely related to the first, was the opportunity for captives to achieve positions of great influence and authority in tribal affairs. "The Indian institution of adoption entailed the fullest kind of socialization of the white child," A. Irving Hallowell explains. "It prepared him for all the roles which were open to him in Indian society." Narratives of captivity describe a surprising number of cases in which captives became chiefs. Some of their descendants are tribal leaders to this day. Almost one third of the captives known to Swanton became chiefs or wives of chiefs. This fact "is one indication of the complete receptiveness of these cultures to transculturites. This basic

59 Alford, Civilization, 1-3.

receptiveness was mediated to a large degree by the nature of their social organization and kinship structure."

While pointing out that Indians had no such opportunity to become leaders in white society, Hallowell asserts that Indian receptiveness of persons of other cultures smoothed the way for white adults as well as children to cross over in the contest of civilization.⁶⁰

⁶⁰ Hallowell, "American Indians, White and Black," 527.

CHAPTER III

THE CULTURAL MILIEU FROM WHICH THEY CAME

Some anthropologists and historians believe that pre-existing conditions determined whether a white captive readily adopted or strongly resisted the Indian way of life. Such characteristics as race, intelligence, upbringing and religious training have been suggested as determinants of the rate and degree of assimilation. It is the purpose of this chapter to analyze case studies in search of correlations between the captive's original cultural milieu and the extent of his adoption of the Indian way of life.

A relative of Frances Slocum (the famous "lost sister of Wyoming") has suggested that heredity was the determining factor in assimilation. In an address to the Anthropology Section of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, Charles E. Slocum claimed that her Quaker inheritance enabled Frances to resist the savage practices of her captors and to influence them to improve their way of life. He said that Frances' captivity was unique in that her ancestors were not typical "rough and ready" frontier people. She was a "delicate, timid, female

child rudely transferred from a quiet family in the Society of Friends to a savage environment among hideous strangers in time of war."¹ The scenes which she witnessed during her capture "were so savage and shocking as to soon obscure all memory of details of her environment and a brief period of parental training ... and to leave her as a foundation for a worthy future character only the influence of heredity." This heritage enabled her to avoid adopting the more savage traits of Indian culture and to acquire only the supportive characteristics of tribal life. "The kindly disposition of her Quaker ancestors, the good-will-to-all-persons, the for-generations-inbred considerate mood governing expressions and actions, curbing and disciplining impulse to the enthronement of reason--all had left an indelible impress on her psychic life."²

If the circumstances of this case support Slocum's theory, then Frances' experiences may provide evidence that inherent moral qualities strongly influence assimilation. If Frances had completely forgotten her earlier environment and had yet resisted the adoption of traits common to females among her captors, such biologically transmitted precepts may have been responsible. The evidence indicates,

1 Charles Elihu Slocum, History of Frances Slocum (Defiance, Ohio: Charles E. Slocum, 1908), unpagéd preface.

2 Ibid., 36-37.

however, that she retained remarkably vivid recollections of her life before captivity. After living almost 70 years with the Indians, she was able to describe the house in which the family lived before moving to the Wyoming Valley and she remembered the great heap of money counted out on the table when her father sold the property.³

Although there is no evidence to suggest that heredity created cultural differences between Frances and her Indian companions, her life style did vary from theirs in several details. After settling on a reservation she became wealthy by Indian standards, lived in a comfortable home and kept it spotlessly clean. She ate off dishes which she washed immediately after the meal. When visitors remarked on the practice, she credited her white mother with having trained her in habits of cleanliness.⁴ Her early parental training, brief as it was, enabled her to retain cultural characteristics which differed from the practices of her adopted people.

Did her way of life influence the Indians to improve theirs? There is little evidence to support the claim that it did. Her neighbors respected her as an influential woman, but this might be expected of a wealthy widow of a chief. It is probable that her husband's

3 George Peck, Wyoming (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1858), 270-74.

4 Ibid., 267-68.

deafness rather than her salutary influence prevented him from taking the warpath. Other members of her Indian family died violently, for one son-in-law was killed in a drunken brawl and a rejected suitor murdered her granddaughter.⁵

Slocum's belief in the uniqueness among Indian captives of his relative's background is not supported by the facts. An appreciable number of captives had a genteel ancestry. However, his theory that captives reared in sheltered surroundings reacted differently to primitive conditions from those of "common" frontier stock merits investigation. The following case studies relate to female captives removed from well educated families. If such captives were more successful than others in resisting assimilation, Slocum's claims for the importance of genteel ancestry as a determinant of assimilation may well be correct.

Captivity of Frances Slocum

Frances Slocum was captured by Delaware Indians in the Wyoming Valley of Pennsylvania on November 2, 1778. Five years old at the time of her abduction, she remained with the Indians 68 years. Her brothers ranged the wilderness in a futile search for her, and her mother offered

5 Ibid., 270-74.

large rewards for her return. Many years passed before they abandoned the quest. Then, in 1837, a white man who could speak the Miami language visited an Indian home near the Wabash River and discovered that the head of the family was a white woman. She told him that her name was Slocum. She had never revealed her identity to any other visitor because of her fear that white relatives would compel her to abandon her Indian family. Now an old woman, she was willing for her white relatives, if any still lived, to know of her whereabouts.

As soon as they heard the astounding news, Frances Slocum's brothers hurried to her wilderness home. They urged her to return with them to Pennsylvania, if not to stay, at least for a visit. But she declined:

I cannot. I cannot. I am an old tree. I cannot move about. I was a sapling when they took me away. It is all gone past. I am afraid I should die and never come back. I am happy here. I shall die here and lie in that grave-yard, and they will raise the pole at my grave with the white flag on it, and the Great Spirit will know where to find me. I should not be happy with my white relatives. I am glad enough to see them, but I cannot go. I cannot go. I have done.⁶

Frances gave a brief account of her captivity to her brother, Joseph, in which she emphasized the kind treatment that she had received. Her first Indian home was that of Chief Tack-horse. "Early one morning Tack-horse took me and dressed my hair in the Indian fashion, and painted

6 Ibid., 262.

my face," she related. "He then dressed me up, and put on me beautiful wampum, and made me look very fine."⁷ Frances recalled that the wampum pleased her greatly. This may have been her first step toward Indianization, to be followed in a short time by the crucial event of adoption:

I was now adopted by Tack-horse and his wife in the place of one they had lost a short time before, and they gave me her name. When the Indians lose a child, they often adopt someone in its place, and treat that one in all respects as their own. This is the reason why they so often carry off the children of white people.⁸

By the time she was thirteen, Frances had come to regard the Indians as her people and to dread the possibility of recapture by the whites. Upon reaching puberty it seemed only natural for her to marry an Indian:

I was always treated kindly by the Delawares; and while I lived with them I was married to a Delaware by the name of Little Turtle. He afterward left me and went west of the Mississippi. I would not go with him. My old mother stayed here, and I chose to stay with her. My adopted father could talk English, and so could I while he lived. It has now been a long time since I forgot it all.⁹

The failure of Frances' first marriage did not deter her from forming a second Indian union. She lived with the Deaf Man, a Miami chief, until his death many years later. They had four children. A few years after Frances rejected the chance to rejoin her white relatives, the Government compelled the Miamis to move west of the Mississippi. Joseph Slocum successfully petitioned Congress to grant his

7 Ibid., 274-76. 8 Ibid., 276. 9 Ibid., 279.

sister permission to remain on her land. But Frances became despondent after the Indian removal. Although her widowed daughter remained with her, she felt surrounded by an utterly foreign way of life. She contrasted the communal tribal life style with the vices and thirst for gain of backwoods neighbors who coveted the square mile that Congress had given her. When she became ill she refused medical aid, lamenting that as her people had been driven away and their lands given to greedy strangers, she had lost the desire to live. She died on March 9, 1847.¹⁰

Captivity of Eunice Williams

Eunice Williams, daughter of the Reverend John Williams, was a product of a refined environment and a strict Puritan upbringing.¹¹ Her case has many similarities to that of Frances Slocum, such as capture during early childhood, determination to remain with the Indians, and a desire to renew acquaintanceship with white relatives. But there were significant differences, including conversion to another Christian faith rather than acceptance of Indian religion. Among factors which make her case unusual are the importance of her family in colonial

¹⁰ Ibid., 282-83.

¹¹ John Williams, The Redeemed Captive Returning to Zion (Northampton: Hopkins, Bridgman, and Company, 1853), 130.

affairs, her status as a Puritan minister's daughter, and the efforts of both French and English governors to redeem her.

John Williams, pastor of the Deerfield, Massachusetts, church, had been a school teacher before entering the ministry. He had studied at the Roxbury Latin School and obtained a B. A. degree from Harvard College. A student of both literature and science, he had collaborated with Cotton Mather in some of his writings. Mrs. Williams, a member of one of the most cultured and influential families of New England, was the daughter of the Reverend Eleazar Mather and the granddaughter of Richard Mather.¹²

Iroquois warriors abducted the Williams family during a massive raid on Deerfield in 1704. They massacred Mrs. Williams and several of her children. Eunice, her father, and the remaining children, along with more than 100 other Deerfield captives, were taken by the Iroquois to Canada. After arriving there the Indians, as usual, divided the prisoners among their villages and subsequently sold many of them to French families. Eight-year-old Eunice was held at a Mohawk village in the vicinity of a Jesuit mission. John was held by the French at Fort Chambly, some distance away.

¹² Raymond P. Stearns, "John Williams," Allen Johnson and Dumas Malone (eds.), Dictionary of American Biography (20 Vols. & 3 Supps. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1928-1958), XX, 270.

All of the Deerfield captives were urged by the Indians and French to become converts to Catholicism. John Williams, even in captivity, managed to counteract this persuasion among many of the scattered members of his flock. Even after the priests had him removed to Chateaufiche he managed to write to his son, Samuel, berating him for accepting Jesuit teaching, and persuading him to return to Massachusetts when given the opportunity.

John Williams exerted himself to persuade Eunice to cling to her religion and civilization. He appealed to Philippe de Rigaud de Vaudreuil, Governor General of New France, for permission to visit his daughter, and it was granted. On his first visit he was encouraged to observe that she remembered her Puritan prayers. On his next visit, however, he realized that the Jesuit missionaries and Indians had gained her allegiance. Vaudreuil, who sincerely sympathized with Williams, offered to purchase the child or to obtain an Iroquois girl held captive by an enemy tribe in exchange for her release. Although the Governor was a hero to the Indians because of his record as their wartime ally, the Mohawks refused to part with her.¹³

In October, 1706, John Williams and 56 other captives gained their freedom as a result of negotiations

¹³ Williams, The Redeemed Captive Returning to Zion, 10-26, 34-37, 90, 130.

by Joseph Dudley, Captain General and Governor of Massachusetts. Dudley's envoys tried to obtain the release of the other captives, but Eunice and many other children resolutely refused to return to Deerfield. These captives had forgotten the English language, accepted the Catholic religion, and adopted the Iroquois life style.

But John Williams still hoped to redeem his child. Six years after his release, he sent John Schuyler, a member of a wealthy and influential New York family, to Canada to offer a large ransom for her. Schuyler learned that Eunice had recently married an Indian. The priest who performed the ceremony had protested because of her youth, but Eunice had threatened to live out of wedlock with the warrior and the Jesuit had reluctantly married them.

As long as he lived, John Williams refused to accept the fact that his daughter had abandoned her religion and civilization. In 1714 he returned to Montreal for a last attempt to redeem her, but wrote as follows of his lack of success:

And she is yet obstinately resolved to live and die here, and will not so much as give me one pleasant look. It's beyond my ability . . . to make you understand how ours are besotted. The English are so naturalized to the customs and manners of the French and Indians and have forgotten the English tongue, and are so many of them

married or gotten into nunneries . . . that I think it would be far easier to gain twice the number of French and Indians to go with us than English.¹⁴

While the citizens of Deerfield were concerned about the welfare of all of their missing children, the passage of time obliterated their hope of redeeming the captives. But Eunice continued to occupy the prayers of the congregation for many years. Her case was unique. The daughter of a divine, she must be rescued from the heresy of Catholicism and restored to the true religion. John Williams' sons and grandsons followed him into the ministry and after his death they kept up his practice of public prayer for Eunice's salvation. The futility of their efforts is revealed by a sermon preached by Reverend Solomon Williams in 1741 describing a visit that Eunice and her Indian husband had made to their Deerfield relatives. Offered a large tract of land to remain, Eunice refused on the ground that it would endanger her soul. She remained true to that conviction during the remainder of her long life.¹⁵

The Eunice Williams captivity provides an excellent opportunity to consider the effects of pre-captivity nurture upon assimilation. It is evident that she enjoyed

¹⁴ Emma Lewis Coleman, New England Captives Carried to Canada (Portland, Me.: Southworth Press, 1925), II, 44-53.

¹⁵ Williams, The Redeemed Captive, 170-72.

the love of a close-knit and cultured family and that her relatives and neighbors would have been overjoyed by her return even after she had committed two almost unpardonable sins - conversion to Catholicism and marriage to an Indian. Yet these family and religious ties were not strong enough to withstand the forces of assimilation.

Captivity of Mary Boyeau

Mary Boyeau, like Frances Slocum and Eunice Williams, belonged to a well educated family. Her father was a scientist who moved from New York to Spirit Lake, Minnesota, to study the flora and fauna of that frontier region. His use of microscopes aroused the suspicions of the Sioux, and Inkpaduta's warriors made him one of their first victims during the Spirit Lake Massacre of 1857. The raiders carried several women and girls into captivity, including Mary and her sister.

Mary's case is included in this study because of the opportunity it affords to compare the assimilation of females of similar backgrounds under contrasting captivity conditions. Like Frances and Eunice, she acquired an Indian husband and, so far as is known, she remained with her captors as long as she lived. There were crucial differences in the women's experiences, however, for Frances and Eunice were captured during the eighteenth century by eastern woodland tribes and reared with

kindness. They entered into Indian marriages as a natural event in a culture which they had accepted as their own. Mary was captured a century later by a Plains tribe, treated brutally, and compelled to marry a warrior who already had a wife. The foregoing cases indicate that a refined pre-captivity milieu provided no deterrent to assimilation when the captive received kind treatment. The question arises as to whether mistreatment of a cultured female captive would result in preventing or retarding assimilation.

In 1864 Mary met Fanny Kelly, a young married woman who had been captured a few months earlier. The prisoners were permitted to converse on occasion and Fanny, redeemed after a comparatively brief captivity, reported that Mary's life with the Sioux seemed even more intolerable than her own. Far from accepting Indian civilization, the young woman preferred death to captivity. "From a life like mine death is an escape and I long to lie down and die, if God's mercy will permit me to escape from this hopeless imprisonment," Mary had insisted.

Misery and consciousness of her own degraded life seemed to have made this poor creature desperate. . . she had never attempted to escape, nor did she seem to think it was possible to get away from her present life, so deep was the despair into which long continued suffering had plunged her.¹⁶

¹⁶ Fanny Kelly, Narrative of My Captivity Among the Sioux Indians (Hartford: Mutual Publishing Company, 1872), 112-13.

On the basis of these three cases, it seems improbable that family backgrounds before captivity determined acceptance or rejection of Indian culture. On the contrary, preliminary investigation indicates that conditions prevailing during captivity were more important than pre-captivity nurture in influencing assimilation. More evidence is needed, however, before the original cultural milieu can be discarded as an important determinant.

Experiences of Amanda Barber

Amanda Barber was a young woman who experienced many of the same hardships as Mary Boyeau. In one respect her experiences were unique, however, for she joined the Indians voluntarily. A well educated and deeply religious person, she was employed as a Federal government clerk when a delegation of Sioux chiefs visited the nation's capital in 1867. Sincerely interested in the welfare of Indians and attracted by what she had read of the romance of primitive life, she attached herself to a young chief, Squatting Bear, offering to marry him and to serve his nation as a teacher and missionary. Although the New York Times published an account of her experiences which characterized her offer as "a fit of enthusiasm or insanity," she demonstrated her sincerity by accompanying the Indians when they returned to Dakota Territory.

Miss Barber received a rude shock upon her arrival at the Sioux village, for only then did she learn that Squatting Bear already had two wives. These women abused her, assigned all of the hardest chores to her, and lived in such squalor that the realities of her situation rapidly supplanted her romantic visions of the Indian life style. Still she attempted to fulfill her duties as missionary and teacher, but with little success as the Sioux reacted to her efforts with contempt and indifference.

Although Amanda joined the Indians voluntarily, her status soon changed to that of a captive. After witnessing the burning of three white captives, she began to seek an opportunity to escape, but as Squatting Bear had already murdered one of his wives, she feared that recapture would result in her death. On the annual buffalo hunt she rode hundreds of miles tied on the back of a half-wild pony. This painful experience convinced her that such a life was intolerable. Finally, in desperation, she spurred her pony into a ravine in a hopeless escape attempt. Squatting Bear overtook her and almost beat her to death.

In 1870 Squatting Bear traded Miss Barber to a Cheyenne chief for three ponies. She had an easier life with the Cheyennes and remained with them two years, but she refused to adopt their cultural traits. In 1872 she escaped to Fort Benton. The only evidence of assimilation

was her knowledge of Indian language.¹⁷ Thus, for the young woman who had sought the opportunity to live as an Indian, adjustment to the life style of her chosen people proved to be impossible.

In analyzing the cases of these four females, all products of genteel families, no evidence has been found to substantiate the theory that the pre-captivity cultural milieu played an appreciable role in resistance to assimilation. While Eunice Williams and Frances Slocum lived contentedly to old age with their captors, Mary Boyeau wished for death and Amanda Barber risked death to escape. The absence of significant correlation between nurture and Indianization in these and other cases indicates that factors aside from superior familial characteristics, refined upbringing, good education, or religious training acted as determinants in assimilation.

Still to be considered is the theory that racial or national origins influenced the degree of Indianization. Carl Coke Rister, a frontier historian who has written extensively about Indian warfare in the Southwest, asserts that it was easier for captive Mexicans than for Anglo-Americans to adapt to the Indian way of life. The typical Mexican was poor and degraded. "He must take no great cultural step, therefore, in going from the life he had

17 New York Times, July 4, 1872, p. 2.

lived to that required by his captors." As evidence of this fact Rister points out that 'Indianized' Mexicans were much more common among Apaches, Comanches, and Kiowas than were Anglo-Americans.¹⁸

Original sources do indicate that Mexican captives frequently became completely assimilated. Thomas Fitzpatrick, veteran scout and Kiowa Indian agent, reported that Mexican males, when adopted into the tribe, became skillful marauders, while females frequently married Indians.¹⁹ But is there evidence that captives of other ethnic origins were more successful in resisting assimilation? A majority of captives were taken from one of three stocks--Anglo-American, German-American, or Mexican. The evidence does not suggest that the ethnic origins of captives had much to do with the degree to which they were or were not assimilated by their captors. Several representative case studies should make the point clear.

Captivity of Clinton Smith

Clinton Smith, the 11 year-old son of an Anglo-Saxon ranch family, was captured by Comanche Indians near Dripping Springs, Texas, on March 3, 1869. His younger

18 Rister, Border Captives, 9, 58-59.

19 Thomas Fitzpatrick, Report, as quoted in James Mooney, "Calendar History of the Kiowa Indians," Bureau of American Ethnology Annual Report, 17th (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1898), 174.

brother, Jeff, was taken at the same time. Clinton remained in captivity for almost four years and Jeff about six years. Both boys became thoroughly Indianized. After redemption they experienced a great deal of difficulty in readjusting to the white man's way of life. Eventually they married and became respected ranchers, but they retained a strong affection for their Indian friends. Both of them have written accounts of their experiences which reveal interesting aspects of assimilation.

The band that captured the Smith boys consisted of Comanches and Lipans. The Comanches adopted Clinton soon after reaching their village. By the spring of 1870 he had become a "white Indian" even though he had been in captivity only a year. He enjoyed swimming, roping buffalo calves, and riding wild horses with the Indian boys and regarded himself as one of them.

During their wanderings, the band fell in with Geronimo's Apaches, and the fierce Chiricahua traded the Comanches a horse and arms and ammunition for Jeff. They tied the youngster so that he could not move and branded him like a calf. In February 1871 the tribes went their separate ways and the boys parted with great sorrow.

In the spring of 1871, Clinton, then 13, went on a raid into Texas. He met other captives and all of the boys his age were compelled to accompany war parties. At first the warriors used them to hold the horses. After

some experience, they became full-fledged warriors themselves. Clinton was compelled by his chief to do his share of the fighting. One night he went on a horse stealing raid right into a Texas town. Lamps were burning and Clinton could have escaped, but he had come to consider the Comanches to be his own people and he had no desire to leave them.

A year or two later the Comanche band camped with Geronimo's Apaches and Clinton enjoyed a brief reunion with his brother. By that time Jeff had almost entirely forgotten the English language. He seemed unable to recall who he was, but he remembered Clinton.

One of Clinton's fellow captives named Adolph Korn, a German boy who had been held for eight or nine years, became one of the most skillful warriors in the band. Once they made a night foray into a little town. Although lights were still burning and the Indians refused to follow, Adolph and Clinton entered the stables and led the horses out one by one.

On September 20, 1872, General Ranald McKenzie caught up with the Comanches near the Red River and the startled Indians fled in all directions. But one warrior did not run--the German boy, Adolph Korn. He hid in the brush and shot an arrow through the lapel of General McKenzie's coat, narrowly missing the skin. Many squaws and Indian children were killed during the attack and

Clinton burned with hatred against his own race. That night he joined in a desperate attack on the troops which enabled some of the prisoners to escape. During the next few months the Comanches hit the frontier hard. Clinton saw so many people massacred that he considered killing a person "of no more consequence than killing a cow."

Pressure from troops finally forced the band onto the reservation at Fort Sill. Clinton refused to return to the white people until forcibly delivered to the fort by the Indians. Along with eight other captives²⁰ he remained locked in the guardhouse to prevent his running away.

After identification, Clinton Smith and Adolph Korn rode to San Antonio under troop escort. When they made camp the first night, they tried to steal horses and escape. The soldiers guarded them closely during the rest of the trip and delivered them to Adolph Korn's father, the owner of the largest candy store in San Antonio. The German boy was absolutely uncontrollable. He kept getting into trouble and urged Clinton to run away with him. Then 16 years old, he had been with the Indians half of his life. A short time after his release he stole a horse and rejoined the Comanches.

²⁰ One of these captives was a sixteen-year-old girl with a half-Indian baby. She had forgotten her name and no one ever reclaimed her.

Clinton, too, had become almost completely assimilated. He found it difficult to resume life as a white boy, especially after his brother was reclaimed from Geronimo. After years of kind treatment, however, he began to feel shame and remorse for having killed so many of his own people. In later life he still felt defensive when asked about his life as an Indian, asserting that he had "without choice, absorbed the customs and manners of a savage tribe."²¹

It is evident from Clinton's narrative that both Anglo-American and German-American captives became thoroughly Indianized. In this case study Clinton readjusted to white civilization with great difficulty while Adolph Korn rejected it entirely. Is this an indication that Germans were easier than other captives to assimilate? The following case study of a German-American who became a "white Indian" warrior may be helpful in considering this possibility.

Captivity of Herman Lehmann

Herman Lehmann was born of German parents on June 5, 1859. Captured by Apaches in May 1870 in Gillespie County, Texas, he lived with them four years. Then he

²¹ Clinton L. Smith, The Boy Captives (Hackberry, Texas: Frontier Times, 1927), 30-57, 67-71, 112, 116-40, 152, 162, 168-69, 177-79.

killed an Apache medicine man, fled to the Comanches, and was adopted into that tribe. He remained with the Comanches until his restoration to the whites, a fully grown man and a fearsome warrior, probably having participated in as many raids against the whites as did any other Indianized Texas captive.

Upon reaching the Apache village, Herman withstood torture so bravely that his captors considered him to be warrior timber. Once he escaped but was recaptured and whipped. Then an Indian boy taught him the Apache language and showed him how to hunt with a bow.²² He herded the horses and served Chief Carnoviste: "He stole me, so I belonged to him. I would get his horse, bring his food, light his pipe, bathe his feet, paint his skin, tighten the spikes on his arrows, catch lice on his head and body, and attend to what other chores he required, some not decent to put in his book."²³

When he had been with the Apaches about a year, he participated in the first of many raids. The war party attacked a family traveling in a wagon, killing and scalping the parents and a baby, and capturing a boy of six and a girl of eight. The children cried constantly

22 Herman Lehmann, Nine Years With the Indians (Austin: Von Boeckmann-Jones Co., 1927), 1, 13-20.

23 Ibid., 24.

and refused to eat, so the Indians, considering them unfit for adoption, killed them and hung their bodies on a tree as food for the vultures.²⁴

One of the most successful strategies of Indians in inducing a captive to accept their way of life was to convince him that he no longer had a white family. The Apaches were able to deceive Herman in this way because his family had temporarily abandoned their ranch and moved to safety in East Texas. The Indians took him within sight of his former home, and when he saw that it was deserted they told him that they had killed his family. Feeling himself alone in the world except for the Indians, he began to enjoy his new way of life. In a short time he became proficient in Indian activities and considered himself superior to boys he had once feared.²⁵

When the Apaches temporarily went on the reservation, only two years after Herman's capture, he hid from the soldiers. During an outbreak a short time later, he participated in a fight with Texas Rangers. Recognized as white, he had only to give himself up, as a Mexican

24 Lehmann, Nine Years With the Indians, 1, 13-18, 33-41.

25 A. C. Greene, The Last Captive (Austin: Encino Press, 1972), 24. Greene believes that Herman's acceptance of the lie about the death of his parents was of paramount importance in turning a "shy, introverted white captive" into "a cocky, capable Indian."

captive did, by running toward the Rangers with his hands lifted high. But Lehmann fought until the Rangers killed his horse, pinning him to the ground. When the Rangers rode up, he feigned death. In a moment they spurred on in pursuit of the Indians. Then he freed himself and hid in the brush. Later the Rangers returned and searched for him, passing within a few feet of his hiding place. After they abandoned the search, he took up the Indians' trail. He walked 300 miles and almost starved to death in order to rejoin the tribe.²⁶

Five years after his capture, Herman killed a medicine man in a drunken brawl and fled from the Apaches to join the Comanches. "I told them," he said, "that I was a white man by birth but an Indian by adoption; that I loved the Indian and hated the white man; that on my shield were the scalps of whites whom I had killed in battle, and that I was regarded by my race as a mortal enemy."²⁷ Adopted by a Comanche family, Lehmann remained with the tribe four years, raiding most of the time, killing settlers and collecting their scalps.

Like several other captives Lehmann became Indianized more completely as a result of the brutality practiced by white soldiers against his adopted people.

26 Lehmann, Nine Years With the Indians, 98-102.

27 Ibid., 143-44.

The United States Cavalry and Tonkaway Indian scouts attacked the Comanche camp while the warriors were away on a horse stealing raid. They killed and mutilated five squaws. Lehmann vowed to kill and mutilate twice that number of white women.²⁸

But the period in which the Indian could hold his own against troops was rapidly closing. Gradually the soldiers gained control over the South Plains as white buffalo hunters eliminated the Indians' food supply. Faced with starvation, Chief Quanah, son of the famous captive, Cynthia Ann Parker, led the Comanches to the reservation. One of the last to go in, Lehmann spent his final years among the Indians as an adopted member of Quanah's family. "Quanah told me my mother and folks were still alive, and asked me if I wanted to go to them," he recalled. "I told him no; that the Indians were my people. . . ."

Finally, under Quanah's persuasion, Lehmann agreed to go home, the last captive to be released by the Comanches. He made the trip from Fort Sill, Oklahoma, to Loyal Valley, Texas, under military guard. During his first year of redemption it was necessary to watch him constantly to prevent his running away. But in time he ceased longing for the wild Comanche ways, settled down with a wife, and raised a family.²⁹

28 Ibid., 185-86. 29 Ibid., 186-215.

Unlike Clinton Smith, Herman appears to have experienced little remorse for having killed whites. He accepted the values and the practices of the Comanche culture, including the dominant place of warfare, as being no less valid than those traits of the white culture. Like few other captives he bridged the gap between civilizations.

Captivity of Andres Martinez

Andres Martinez, a Mexican-American, was captured by Mescalero Apaches on October 6, 1866, near Las Vegas, New Mexico. About eight years old when taken, he remained in captivity almost 20 years. After hostilities ended he returned to his Mexican family, but in a short time he decided that he belonged with the Indians and went back to the reservation. Eventually, he became an interpreter and teacher in a mission school. At that time he told the story of his captivity to the Reverend J. J. Methvin, missionary to the wild tribes in the Indian Territory.

Andres' original captors kept him only a short time before trading him to another Apache band for a supply of liquor. His new masters beat and abused him until two Kiowa warriors, one of whom was a Mexican captive, took him away from them. The other Kiowa warrior, Heap-o'-Bears, adopted him as a son. The Kiowas treated him kindly.

A change from cruelty to kindness usually facilitated assimilation, and when the Kiowas returned to their homeland on the Wichita, Andres adopted the Indian life style rapidly. When Heap-o'-Bears returned from a raid with two scalps, the boy joined in the scalp dance with wild delight. Within five years the captive had become so completely Indianized that he asked permission to go on raids.

As a young warrior Andres married a Kiowa girl, but she ran away with another Indian. In a short time he married again, only to put her away as they did not get along. A year later he married a third time and lived happily with this wife until she died.

After Andres had lived as an Indian for almost 20 years, he settled down with his band on the reservation. The Indian agent trained him as a blacksmith and his contacts with whites led him to recall the circumstances of his early life. He went home to New Mexico for four years and then returned to the Indians, as "his interests were all identified with the Kiowas, and he had learned to love them."³⁰

In analyzing the experiences of Anglo-American, German-American, and Mexican male captives, no

³⁰ J. J. Methvin, Andele, or the Mexican - Kiowa Captive (Anadarko, Oklahoma: Plummer Printing Company, 1927), 11-47, 58, 69, 109-17, 152-63, 169-78.

corroboration is found for Carl Coke Rister's theory that Mexicans are easier to assimilate than others. Among the three cases presented in this chapter no indication is given that Andres Martinez was more completely Indianized than either Clinton Smith or Herman Lehmann. Indeed he seems to have made fewer raids against whites than they did. When additional cases are considered, however, it is apparent that many Mexicans did become "white Indians."

Preliminary research indicates that other factors being equal, male captives regardless of race or national origin, would adjust to Indian civilization in much the same way. In the instances of Clinton Smith, Herman Lehmann, and Andres Martinez, variables aside from national origin were at a minimum. All three were captured in the same region during the same decade and they underwent many similar experiences. The question arises as to whether the results would have been the same if variables of sex, chronology, or geography had been introduced. In an attempt to answer this question, case studies of three female captives will be presented: an Anglo-American reared by a tribe with an advanced Indian civilization during the eighteenth century, a German at about the same time by a less advanced but still sedentary woodland tribe, and a Mexican by a wandering Plains tribe a century later. If no significant difference can be

detected in these and other cases, it would appear that national origins played an insignificant, if any, role in the Indianization of captives.

Captivity of Mary Jemison

Mary Jemison was born on shipboard about 1743. Her parents were of Scotch-Irish ancestry, that hardy breed of land-seekers who left an indelible mark on the American frontier. The family settled in the Pennsylvania wilderness. In 1755 the French and Indian War brought devastation to their settlement. A war party captured the girl, and she lived the remainder of her life (75 years) as an Indian maiden and squaw. Her narrative of captivity provides one of the best sources available for tracing the course of white assimilation into Indian culture.

Mary was fortunate in being reared by two kind Indian sisters. Upon her arrival at Fort Pitt she experienced a great sense of relief when her captors gave her to two "pleasant looking" Seneca squaws. The squaws took her to their village where they dressed her in the "finest Indian style." Then she underwent an adoption ceremony in which the two women welcomed her as a sister--a replacement for a relative who had died. "I was ever considered and treated by them as a real sister,

the same as though I had been born of their mother," she insisted.³¹

After adoption Mary had an easy life and was employed primarily in taking care of children. But still she was miserable at first, longing for the opportunity to return to her white family. Her adopted sisters gradually weaned her away from these feelings, and through kindness, as well as informal instruction in Indian culture, they began the process which led to assimilation:

My sisters were diligent in teaching me their language; and to their great satisfaction I soon learned so that I could understand it readily, and speak it fluently. I was very fortunate in falling into their hands; for they were kind, good natured women; peaceable and mild in their disposition; temperate and decent in their habits, and very tender and gentle towards me. I have great reason to respect them, though they have been dead a great number of years.³²

Within a year Mary's assimilation was far advanced, but it received a temporary reversal the first time she visited a white settlement. Her adopted sisters took her to Fort Pitt and the white people there began to question her about the circumstances of her captivity. Instantly the desire was rekindled to return to white civilization. Her adopted sisters perceived the change in her attitude and, realizing their mistake, quickly took

³¹ Mary Jemison, A Narrative of the Life of Mrs. Mary Jemison (New York: Random House, 1929), 40-47.

³² Ibid., 48.

her back to their village. "My sudden departure...seemed like a second captivity," she said, "and for a long time I brooded the thoughts of my miserable situation.... Time, the destroyer of every affection, wore away my unpleasant feelings, and I became as contented as before."³³

Mary's adopted sisters continued to instruct her in the Iroquois life style until her assimilation was virtually complete. She lived comfortably in the communal long house until they decided that she was old enough to marry. Then they informed her that arrangements had been made for her to marry a warrior named Sheninjee. This was unwelcome news to the young captive, but it did not occur to her to oppose their wishes. She went to Sheninjee with a great deal of reluctance and they "were married according to Indian custom."

Mary's account of her adjustment to marriage provides one of the best insights available into the kind of relationship which could develop between a white woman and an Indian husband. She had almost attained the age of puberty at the time of her capture and, thus, had lived with her family long enough to absorb some of the usual revulsion at the thought of sexual union between white women and Indian men. It is evident, however, that she

33 Ibid., 50-51.

had become sufficiently assimilated to enable her to overcome those prejudices and to develop feelings of deep affection and respect:

Sheninjee was a noble man; large in stature; elegant in his appearance; generous in his conduct; courageous in war; a friend to peace, and a great lover of justice. He supported a degree of dignity far above his rank, and merited and received the confidence and friendship of all the tribes with whom he was acquainted. Yet, Sheninjee was an Indian. The idea of spending my days with him, at first seemed perfectly irreconcilable to my feelings; but his good nature, generosity, tenderness, and friendship towards me, soon gained my affection; and, strange as it may seem, I loved him!--To me he was ever kind in sickness, and always treated me with gentleness; in fact, he was an agreeable husband, and a comfortable companion. We lived happily together till the time of our final separation.³⁴

Mary's narrative demonstrates how completely Anglo-American females could become "white Indians." After the death of her first husband, Mary and her three-year-old child hid in the woods to avoid redemption when the Indians were compelled to surrender their white prisoners. Even in old age when most of her neighbors were whites she still referred to Indians as her own people.³⁵

34 Ibid., 52-53.

35 Ibid., 67-151. Some of her white neighbors considered her to be a witch. She became known throughout the area as the "White Woman of the Genesee."

Her experiences will be compared to those of Regina Leininger, a German-American, and Tomassa, a Mexican, in search of differences in assimilation patterns which could be attributed to national origins.

Captivity of Regina Leininger

Regina Leininger was the daughter of German immigrants who settled in the wilderness on the west bank of the Susquehanna River. At the age of ten, she and her sister, Barbara, fell into the hands of a Shawnee war party. She remained in captivity for nine years. When Colonel Henry Bouquet forced the Shawnees to give up their captives in 1764, Regina appeared among the bedraggled throng. She had become substantially assimilated, had forgotten her name, and had almost completely lost the use of her native language. Regina's experiences differed greatly from those of Mary Jemison, for female life among the Shawnees was harder than among the matriarchal Senecas. Regina's captors did not adopt her, they treated her harshly, and they used her as a servant.

During her first year of captivity, Regina felt benumbed by the loss of her white family. Her captors gave her to an old woman who treated her so cruelly that she "lived more like an animal than a child." In time, however, her miserable life became second nature and she began to view her captivity as an ordeal which would end

some day with restoration to her family. She acquired many traits of Indian culture, for her very survival depended upon such an adjustment. She learned the language of her captors and gradually lost the use of her own except for some hymns that her mother had taught her. She repeated these hymns before sleeping each night.

When Colonel Bouquet brought the redeemed captives to Carlisle, Pennsylvania, in December 1764 for release to relatives, the roster of prisoners listed Regina as the "German Girl," because she could no longer remember her name. Actually a fully grown woman who resembled an Indian, she spoke only the language of the Shawnees. Her mother searched carefully among the redeemed captives but failed to recognize Regina. She had almost given up hope that her daughter had been recovered when Regina stepped forward and recited the hymns. This last link with civilization provided the medium for her restoration.

The Reverend H. H. Muhlenberg interviewed Regina some three months after her redemption. He found that she had rapidly regained an understanding of German speech, but was unable, or at least reluctant, to speak the language. She appeared to have accepted many traits of Indian culture, but she had retained a central core of her own civilization - a desire to return to it at the first opportunity. While stressing the importance of daily prayer in preserving some vestige of white

civilization, Muhlenberg believed that the miserable life she had led in captivity was primarily responsible for destroying any desire which she might have developed to marry an Indian. Avoidance of sexual involvement prevented her, in Muhlenberg's view, from developing ties that made it so difficult for many female captives to return to their white relatives.³⁶

Captivity of Tomassa

While a great many Mexican females were captured by Indians, comparatively little information has been published about their experiences. Few narratives of captivity written by Mexican women held in the present United States could be located during the course of this research. It is possible, however, to piece together some information about the lives of Mexican captives from the observations of Indian agents, teachers, and other whites who worked with the tribes on reservations.

One of the most interesting Mexican female captives was called Tomassa. Her experiences included capture in early childhood, redemption from captivity, running away to rejoin the Indians, refusal to marry an Indian, marriage to two white men, study and teaching on

³⁶ Henry Melchior Muhlenberg, "Regina, the German Captive," Pennsylvania German Society Proceedings, XV (1906), 82-89.

a reservation, and helping other Mexicans to escape from captivity.

Tomassa was born in northern Mexico about 1841 and was swept up at an early age in one of the frequent Comanche raids that so terrorized the region. The Indians treated her kindly and she lived contentedly as an adopted Comanche for several years. Then the Mexican Government ransomed her along with other captive children.

Unable to recall her family name or where she had come from, she could give authorities no help in notifying her relatives. When no one claimed her, she and a slightly older boy were assigned as servants to a wealthy family.

Their new life of drudgery seeming less attractive to the children than the captivity from which they had been redeemed, they decided to run away at the first opportunity and rejoin the tribe. After accumulating a store of provisions, they slipped away from the hacienda during a celebration. Helping themselves to a horse, they struck out toward the Rio Grande with only the North Star as a guide. After they had ridden hundreds of miles their food supply gave out and they averted starvation by killing the horse and drying the meat in Indian fashion. Having many more miles of desert and mountains to cross, they used the hide to make extra moccasins. Finally they

rejoined their Comanche families, a remarkable feat of pathfinding and endurance for children ten to 12 years of age.

Josiah Butler, teacher at the Comanche-Kiowa Agency at Fort Sill, has described Tomassa's experiences subsequent to her return to the Indians:

And so she was happy to again take up life in the lodge of her Comanche foster mother, with whom she lived until she grew to womanhood, when she married the white trader and ranchman, Joseph Chandler, who was many years her senior. A daughter and three sons were born of this marriage. Although she was a married woman and the mother of several children, she entered the Comanche school at the Fort Sill Agency, when it was first opened by Josiah Butler, to be not only a pupil but also the teacher's interpreter. After her husband's death, she married George Conover, to whom three sons were born. Her children and grandchildren all reside in the vicinity of Anadarko, where she died, December 6, 1900, aged about fifty-five years.³⁷

Another official who reported a part of Tomassa's story was the famous Indian agent, Lawrie Tatum. He relates that she had been promised in marriage to an Indian named Blue Leggings but insisted on marrying Chandler instead. When the Indian declined to give her up, she retorted that he would have to kill her in order

³⁷ Josiah Butler, "Pioneer School Teaching at the Comanche-Kiowa Agency School, 1870-03," Chronicles of Oklahoma, VI (1928), 499-500.

to take her. Finally the red man sold Chandler his rights to the girl.³⁸

After her marriage to Chandler, Tomassa lived on cattle ranches in Texas and the Indian Territory. She adopted many of the ways of white civilization and tried to help Indians to follow her example. Frequently she warned white people of impending raids. Once she saved the lives of two Mexican captives by hiding them under the floor of her house.³⁹

Thus it appears that the assimilation of Tomassa had come full circle. Captured in early childhood, she became so greatly assimilated that she ran away from whites to rejoin her captors. But upon attaining marriageable age, she chose a white suitor over an Indian. And during her mature years she saved Mexican children from the kind of life with the Indians which once she had eagerly sought for herself.

Based on the evidence gleaned from the narratives presented above, is it possible to reach conclusions regarding the importance of national origin in affecting the assimilation of captives? Among the males, all three

38 Lawrie Tatum, Our Red Brothers (Philadelphia; J. C. Winston and Company, 1899), 60-61. The purchase price was three dollars and a crowing chicken.

39 Thomas C. Battey, The Life and Adventures of a Quaker Among the Indians (Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1875), 155-56.

were captured during childhood, abused cruelly at first, then adopted and treated almost as though they were Indians by birth. All three became greatly Indianized, went on raids against white people, and preferred to remain with their captors. Their experiences have so much in common that it is difficult to discover significant differences which could be attributed to pre-captivity cultural influences. Moreover, the experiences of other male captives do not suggest that Indianization was affected by the cultural milieu from which they came.

Jeff Smith, Comanche and Apache captive, remarked that the Indians preferred Mexican captives, "because when they brought them in they could raise them up and no one could tell them from full blood Indians."⁴⁰ Certainly in the Southwest, Mexican captives outnumbered those of Anglo-American or German stock. But this is evidence only that Mexican captives were easier to obtain. It does not necessarily follow that they were easier to assimilate. John R. Swanton has written that it "may very properly be objected that as most Mexicans themselves have Indian blood the testimony of Mexican captives is inconclusive." He could find no evidence, however, that they were more easily assimilated than others.⁴¹

40 Smith, The Boy Captives, 182.

41 Swanton, "Notes on the Mental Assimilation of Races," 497.

As a matter of fact, Andres Martinez seems to have been less thoroughly Indianized than either Clinton Smith or Herman Lehmann. In spite of the fact that he lived longer with the Indians than either Smith or Lehmann, he was the only one of the three who voluntarily returned to his own people. It is true that he eventually rejoined the Indians, but he became an interpreter and teacher and helped his adopted people to learn the white man's way.

The male captives mentioned in the foregoing narratives who became the fiercest warriors were Herman Lehmann and Adolph Korn, both German-Americans.⁴² In the Southwest, other sons of German emigrants became noted warriors. Rudolph Fischer remained a Comanche captive for several years, and after being restored to his parents he took the first opportunity to run away and rejoin his captors.⁴³ Another noted warrior, born in Germany, was

42 A. C. Greene believes that Lehmann's original cultural milieu was important in facilitating assimilation: "Herman came from a peculiar segment of his society: An isolated family which saw few outsiders and did not even speak the language of the world around it. He was more easily assimilated into the simple structure of Indian society because he was used to a simply-structured society already. This thesis cannot always be applied...but it seems safe to assume that a white child taken from a large city...would have had more involved ties to remember and to draw him back...." (The Last Captive, 21). Green's thesis does not hold for Adolph Korn, for that greatly assimilated captive was from San Antonio, a center of population even in 1870.

43 Lehmann, Nine Years With the Indians, 217.

known as Kiowa Dutch. A big, blond youth, he became notorious on the Texas frontier as he raided with the predatory chief, Satanta, and cursed white people in their own languages while doing his best to take their scalps.⁴⁴

Is there any basis for concluding, therefore, that German-American children were more readily assimilated than captives of other origins? When one considers the narratives of the female captives it is found that the German-American, Regina Leininger, was the least assimilated of the three. While Tomassa ran away to rejoin the Indians and Mary Jemison became the contented wife of a warrior, Regina prayed in German every night in order to retain command of her native language. Moreover, Regina's sister, Barbara, successfully resisted assimilation. She cherished the hope of escape, and when the opportunity arose she risked death by torture to traverse hundreds of miles of wilderness to return to civilization.⁴⁵

There appears, then, to be no significant difference between the degrees of assimilation of Anglo-American, German-American, and Mexican captives. Moreover, when other nationalities or races are considered, no clearer picture of the relationship between ancestry and

44 Clarence Wharton, Satanta (Dallas: B. Uphaw & Co., 1935), 14, 59.

45 Barbara Leininger, "Narrative of Marie LeRoy and Barbara Leininger," Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography, XXIX (1905), 407-420.

ease of assimilation emerges. In the earliest period of exploration and colonization, a considerable number of Spaniards fell into the hands of the Indians. Among the earliest of these was Juan Ortiz, captured in Florida in 1529, who lived with the Indians for 11 years. When white men returned to Florida he had become almost completely assimilated.⁴⁶ Cabeza de Vaca and the other survivors of the Narváez Expedition were held in captivity by various tribes in Texas and Mexico but never gave up hope of reaching their countrymen. They learned many of the ways of the Indians and exerted great influence over some of the tribes but were not content to remain with any of them.⁴⁷ On the other hand, when children of unmixed Castilian ancestry were captured in Chihuahua, Mexico, about 1810, by Kiowas and Comanches, they became readily assimilated. The girls married Indians and their descendants became prominent warriors.⁴⁸

Generally speaking, the French got along better with Indians than did the peoples of other European nations.⁴⁹ In Canada the coureurs de bois lived among

⁴⁶ Garcilaso de la Vega, The Florida of the Inca (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1951), 63-79.

⁴⁷ Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca, Alvar, The Journey of Alvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca (Chicago: Rio Grande Press, 1964).

⁴⁸ Hugh D. Corwin, Comanche and Kiowa Captives in Oklahoma and Texas (Lawton, Oklahoma: Hugh D. Corwin, 1959), 14-17.

⁴⁹ De Voto, The Course of Empire, 83-87.

the tribes and assumed many Indian traits but remained essentially Frenchmen. Except for the Iroquois, most tribes participating in the colonial wars were allies of the French.⁵⁰ Consequently, the French received many English captives, while fewer of them became captives themselves. When the Iroquois made prisoners of French children, however, assimilation occurred much the same as it did with children of other national origins.

Among the greatest French-Canadian heroes was François Hertel. A member of one of Canada's most prominent families, he was ennobled by King Louis XIV for leading attacks by French and Indians against Salmon Falls and other New England towns. Yet 29 years earlier, Hertel very nearly became an Iroquois warrior, ready to raid the French settlements.

Hertel was captured by Mohawk Indians in 1661. A deeply religious youth, he asserted that he would never have been taken alive except for concern that his soul was not in a state of grace. The Indians tortured him by cutting off one of his fingers and burning another in the bowl of a pipe. Eighteen years old at the time of his capture, Hertel appears to have been an unlikely candidate for assimilation, but after a year of captivity he became an adopted Iroquois and prepared to join an Indian war party. At that time, however, his wounded fingers became

50 Ibid., 95-99.

badly infected and the raiders left him behind. Thus he remained in the Mohawk town until Father Simon Le Moyne arrived to ransom him. At first he resisted the opportunity to leave the Indians, but the priest changed his mind by reminding him of the eternal damnation awaiting a Christian adopting the sinful ways of the savage life.⁵¹

One final group, Negroes, remains to be considered. Here, unfortunately, fewer primary sources are available. R. W. G. Vail records only two narratives of black captives among the hundreds listed in his bibliography, and in neither case was the captive held long enough to be assimilated.⁵²

Hundreds of Negroes lived with Indians in the South, but most of them were runaway slaves or their descendants who joined the tribes voluntarily. On the South Atlantic coast, as the tribes were crushed by the whites, the surviving Indians intermarried with Negroes until the red men lost their identity. But in the inland South and throughout Florida where Indian tribes maintained their power for

51 Francis Parkman, The Old Regime in Canada (Boston: Little Brown, 1922), 121-22; Slotkin, Regeneration Through Violence, 127. Another famous French-Canadian who almost became an Indian was the explorer, Pierre Esprit Radisson. His narrative of captivity, which will be included in a later chapter, is one of the most revealing in regard to assimilation.

52 Vail, Voice of the Old Frontier, 271-72.

a century and Negro slavery prevailed even longer, Indian-Negro relationships followed a very different course. The Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks, and Seminoles (known as the Five Civilized Tribes) were too strong for the whites to enslave and they became slaveholders themselves. Early in colonial times many white traders married Indian women and gained positions of leadership in the tribes. They introduced the ways of the white man into Indian life, among them being the institution of Negro slavery. In South Carolina, Indians held Negroes in slavery as early as 1748.

But these five powerful tribes did not treat Negro slaves alike. The Cherokees, who held more than 1,000 slaves before their removal to the Indian Territory, were such lenient masters that Negroes frequently ran away from white plantations to live with them. On the other hand, the Choctaws and Chickasaws were severe masters. The form of slavery practiced by the Creeks and their offshoot, the Seminoles, differed greatly from that of the other Civilized Tribes. The Creeks intermarried frequently with their slaves and treated children of their Negro wives the same way they treated their full-blooded Indian children. The Seminoles were on even better terms with their slaves. In fact, black people probably were better treated by these Florida swamp dwellers than by any other tribe. Learning that safety and a warm welcome awaited them among the

Seminoles, slaves began escaping to them as early as 1738. These runaways, known as Maroons, seldom were enslaved by the Seminoles. By 1838, it was estimated, 1,400 Negroes lived among the Seminoles and only 200 of them were slaves. Even the slaves were treated as near equals, and except for contributing a small share of their corn crops to their masters, they lived much like members of the tribe.⁵³

A. Irving Hallowell has noted that blacks became assimilated "to the same role in an Indian culture that they played in white society." The prospect of slavery to Indian masters must have been attractive by comparison to that under whites, however, for Negroes continued to flee to the tribes. Even some freedmen rejected white civilization, choosing to cast their lot with the Cherokees. Thus, like many white captives, thousands of Negroes became Indianized.⁵⁴

In the Ohio Valley and the Southwest, blacks as well as whites became Indianized. Several Negroes in Kentucky and Ohio who were captured in Virginia by the Shawnees and Wyandots became as completely assimilated as their white counterparts.⁵⁵ In Texas and the Southwest,

53 Kenneth W. Porter, "Relations Between Negroes and Indians," Journal of Negro History, XVII (1932), 321-25.

54 Hallowell, "American Indians, White and Black," 522.

55 John Bakeless, Daniel Boone (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1939), 218; James B. Finley, Life Among the Indians (Cincinnati, Cranston and Curts, n.d.), 239-42.

Indians developed the practice of kidnapping blacks to ransom or to sell to slave traders in Arkansas and the Indian Territory.⁵⁶ There was at least one black child with Geronimo's Apache raiders at the time of his final surrender.⁵⁷

One of the most controversial captives in American history was a Florida black man, Luis Pacheco (also known as Louis Fatio). He was born into slavery on the Fatio Plantation in 1800. At a time when the education of slaves was forbidden by law, his master's daughter taught

56 Kenneth W. Porter, "Indians and Negroes on the Texas Frontier," Journal of Negro History, XLI (1956), 287. For an interesting account of the experiences of a black Texas rancher, Britton Johnson, in recovering his own wife and children as well as those of his white neighbors from Comanche and Kiowa captivity in 1864 see J. W. Wilbarger, Indian Depredations in Texas (Austin: Steck Company, 1935), 579-82; Mildred P. Mayhall, Indian Wars of Texas (Waco: Texian Press, 1965), 154-58. Among those recovered were Johnson's infant daughter who had been born in captivity and Lottie Durgan, sister of the famous captive, Millie Durgan. Millie could not be recovered, for the Kiowa chief, Aperiaan Crow, had adopted her and the Indians told Johnson that she had died.

Seven years later the Kiowas killed Johnson and three other black men on the prairie after a fierce fight. The blacks killed their own horses and took refuge behind them. They stood off charge after charge before being ridden into the ground. The Indians scalped them but threw the scalps away as the hair would not serve as a fringe for their deerskin leggings. According to one report Johnson, in return for obtaining the release of the captives, had been compelled to agree to return to the Kiowas and guide them on a raid. He failed to keep the bargain and, therefore, was condemned to death.

57 Paul I. Wellman, Death on Horseback (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1947), caption of photograph between pages 324 and 325.

him to read and write in Spanish, French, and English. From an older brother who had been captured as a baby and reared by the Indians he learned to speak the Seminole language fluently.⁵⁸

During the second Seminole War, Major Francis L. Dade's command received orders to march from Tampa to Fort King (near present Ocala). Dade needed a guide to lead the troops through the swamps and to avoid Indian ambushes, and Pacheco's owner leased him to the troops for that purpose. On December 28, 1835, the Seminoles ambushed the column in the Great Wahoo Swamp. More than 100 soldiers fell in the massacre, and Pacheco was believed to have died with them. By 1837, however, Army officers learned that he was living with the Seminoles and charged that he had deliberately led Dade's troops into ambush.⁵⁹

But according to Pacheco's own story, which remained untold until 1892, the Indians captured him during the attack. He had tried to warn Dade of an impending ambush but the major would not listen to him. When the battle began, he hid behind a tree. The Seminoles found him and would have killed him had he not been saved by a

58 Kenneth W. Porter, "The Early Life of Luis Pacheco ne Fatio," The Negro History Bulletin, VII (1943), 52.

59 (Woodburne Potter), The War in Florida (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1966), 103-09; John Lee Williams, The Territory of Florida (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1962), 219.

son of Chief Jumper. The next day Pacheco pleaded with the chief for his freedom. But Jumper refused: "Let me tell you, you can't go back. As birds fill the air, so the Seminoles fill the woods." Pacheco, therefore, was a captive when he accompanied the Seminoles during their removal to the Indian Territory.⁶⁰

Pacheco told little of his life with the Indians, but he is believed to have become a fierce Seminole warrior and an important leader of the tribe. Joshua Giddings reports that he joined the fiery young chief, Wild Cat, and took part in the attack on Fort Mellon on February 8, 1837.⁶¹ On March 6, 1837, a temporary halt to hostilities began. The Indians agreed to move to the West, but only on condition that the Seminole Negroes could accompany them. Luis was present at the council when this decision was reached, brought there by Chief Jumper who claimed ownership by conquest during the battle with Dade.⁶²

Luis lived with the Seminoles in the Indian Territory from 1838 until 1850. Then he moved to Mexico with Wild Cat, where he used "his learning, his shrewdness and tact" to help the Indians bring their Negro associates

60 Florida Times Union, October 30, 1892.

61 Joshua Giddings, The Exiles of Florida (Columbus, Ohio: Follett, Foster and Company, 1858), 114, 136.

62 "Louis Pacheco: The Man and the Myth," Journal of Negro History, XXVIII (1943), 68.

to freedom south of the Rio Grande. Wild Cat's band provided sanctuary for many escaping Texas slaves, and at least once they assisted a large number of Creek slaves to escape from the Indian Territory to Mexico.⁶³ Luis remained with the Indians for almost 60 years. At the age of 92 he returned to the Florida plantation of his former owner and insisted that he had been a captive, not a conspirator.⁶⁴

As a final attempt to ascertain the importance of race and national origins in facilitating or retarding Indianization, the experiences of 50 additional captives of various racial stocks were analyzed. Factors considered in attempting to appraise degrees of assimilation include knowledge of an Indian language, loss of one's native language, attaining skill in such activities as use of the bow and arrow, marriage to an Indian (voluntary or involuntary), attempts to escape, rejection of an opportunity to be redeemed, and participation in warfare against whites.

While the evidence in some cases was incomplete it did suggest that no significant correlation between national origins and assimilation exists. Among captives

63 Giddings, The Exiles of Florida, 333-38. This work includes an interesting account of Pacheco's former owner's suit to compel the United States Government to pay for the loss of her valuable slave. The question sparked a heated Congressional debate over the question of "property in human flesh."

64 Florida Times Union, October 30, 1892.

substantially assimilated were the Anglo-Americans Thomas Armstrong, Millie Durgan, Abigail French, Hanno Hurst, John McCullough, Jeff Smith, Matthew Brayton, Temple Friend, Dan M'Allum, John Valentine Maxie, Peter Waggoner, John McLennan, Rebecca Kellogg, and Rachel Malone. In this same category were the German-Americans Rudolph Fischer, Adolph Korn, and Kiowa Dutch, and the Mexicans Asu-que-ti, Aw-i, Bernardino Saenz, Hoah-Wah, Long Horn, and Mak-suh. Among captives not substantially assimilated were the Anglo-Americans T. A. Babb, Jonathan Door, James Moore, James Smith, Hugh Gibson, Olive Oatman, John Gyles, Isaac Bradley, and Rachel Plummer. In this category, also, were the German-Americans Anna Metzger, Barbara Leininger, and Sarah Strauch, and the Mexicans Pres-lean-no, Sale-beal and Martina Diaz.

Other factors will have to be examined to learn why some captives accepted life as an Indian while others rejected every phase of their captors' culture.

CHAPTER IV

THE CULTURE AREA IN WHICH THEY WERE HELD

If the cultural origins of the captives had little effect on the degree of their assimilation, perhaps the differing cultures of their captors had a greater effect. Of paramount importance in this regard was the treatment of captives. This chapter will ascertain whether treatment of captives varied among Indian culture groups and if so, how much? And did such variations in treatment affect assimilation?

Most redeemed captives claimed that they and others had been subjected to torture or abuse, yet some scholars believe that their atrocity stories are greatly exaggerated. Other historians, however, believe the atrocities occurred, but justify Indian actions on the ground that whites were equally guilty and that warriors merely retaliated for what had been done to their people. Nathaniel Knowles concedes that Indians gained great emotional satisfaction from torturing captives, but he believes that Indians must be judged in terms of their own cultural mores and norms rather than those of white society. And Knowles calls attention to the often

forgotten fact that Europeans introduced many of the most cruel forms of torture, such as burning at the stake, to the Indians.¹

One of the most forthright defenders of the Indians against charges of cruelty is James Axtell. He asserts that the Indians conducted a well planned campaign, based upon good treatment, to induce adopted captives to accept the Indian way of life. They "showered them with gifts" and gave them "abundant promises of future kindness." Later the captives acknowledged "that the Indians were as good as their word." This kind of treatment had great influence on the attitudes of captives toward their captors. The Indians continued "by daily example and instruction" to work toward the assimilation of captives. They "made a concentrated effort to inculcate in them Indian habits of mind and body. If the captives could be taught to think, act, and react like Indians, they would cease to be English and would assume an Indian identity."² Axtell referred especially to the treatment

1 Nathaniel Knowles, "The Torture of Captives by the Indians of Eastern North America," American Philological Society, Proceedings, LXXXII (1940), 151.

2 James Axtell, "The White Indians of Colonial America," 68, 75, 81. For other opinions that the Indians were less to blame than they have been depicted see Jason Almus Russell, "The Narratives of the Indian Captivities," Education, LI (Oct. 1930), 86-88; Dorothy A. Dondore, "White Captives Among the Indians," New York History, XIII (1932), 297; Dorothy Forbis Behan, The Captivity Story in American Literature (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1952).

of captives who had been selected for adoption, but he contends that, in general, "captive testimony has chipped away at the stereotype of Indian cruelty." Yet many of the narratives which he cites contain graphic accounts of torture and abuse.

While Axtell asserts that the eastern Indians were not excessively cruel, Walter S. Campbell writes that the "white man brought his notions of Indian warfare from the dark and bloody ground east of the Missouri. There he had heard of the fagot and the stake, of cruelty and torture, and he assumed the Plains Indians would do the same thing." Campbell searched government records and found few instances of torture by western Indians.³ Evidently, regional variations in treatment of captives existed, but scholars differ in their interpretations as to their nature and extent.

Spencer and Jennings divide the present United States into five major native American culture areas: the Ultra-Mississippi (mainly east of the Mississippi River with a westward extension along the Gulf Coast); the Plains; the Greater Southwest; the West (containing sub-areas in the Great Basin, Plateau, and California); and

3 Walter S. Campbell, "The Plains Indian in Literature and Life," in Willard and Goodykoontz (eds.), The Trans-Mississippi West, 191-92. For an opposite view see Slotkin, Regeneration Through Violence, 357.

the Northwest Coast (which extends from northern California to Alaska).⁴ White captive-taking occurred frequently in the first three areas, and narratives of a representative number of captives held in all three will be analyzed to determine whether the treatment of prisoners differed sufficiently to affect assimilation. There are few narratives of captives taken on the Northwest Coast or in the West culture area. The evidence that has survived, however, suggests that, although treatment of captives varied from region to region, the differences did not substantially affect the rate or degree of assimilation among white captives.

Captivity of Juan Ortiz

Juan Ortiz was born in Seville, Spain. Eighteen years old when he accompanied the Narváez Expedition to Florida, he and three companions fell into the hands of the Timucua tribe in 1528. One of the first Europeans ever captured by North American Indians, he remained with them 12 years before his rescue by the DeSoto Expedition.

Chief Hirrihigua wanted revenge because members of the Narváez Expedition had tortured him and murdered his mother. He kept Ortiz under guard while compelling the three other captives to run around the plaza until his

⁴ Robert F. Spencer and Jesse D. Jennings, The Native Americans (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), 1-5.

warriors killed them with arrows. Then the chief ordered Ortiz out to suffer the same fate, but his wife and daughters begged for the boy's life, pointing out that he had had no part in the atrocities. Hirrihigua agreed reluctantly to spare Juan's life, but made him a slave and treated him cruelly. He forced the youth to guard the tribal burying grounds against wild animals every night and compelled him during feasts to run continuously in the plaza for the entire day. Juan wished many times that he had died with his companions.

Convinced finally that Ortiz would survive his harsh treatment, Hirrihigua determined to torture him to death:

So to finish with the youth he gave the order on a certain feast day to kindle a great fire in the center of the plaza, and when he saw many live coals made, he commanded that they be spread out and that over them there be placed a grill-like wooden structure which stood a yard above the ground, and upon which they should put his captive in order to roast him alive. Thus it was done, and here the poor Spaniard, after being tied to the grill, lay stretched out on one side for a long time. But at the shrieks of the miserable youth, the wife and daughter of the Cacique rushed up, and, pleading with their lord and even scolding him for his cruelty, removed the boy from the fire, not, however, before he was half-baked and blisters that looked like halves of oranges had formed on one of his sides. Some of these blisters burst and much blood ran from them, so that they were painful to behold.⁵

5 Garcalaso de la Vega, The Florida of the Inca, 63-64.

Ortiz on many other occasions had reason to be grateful to the chief's wife and daughter. Finally, when Ortiz survived this terrible ordeal, and Hirrihigua determined once more to put him to death, the young Indian woman helped him to escape.⁶ She guided him to a village ruled by Mucozo, a chief who desired to marry her. As a favor to the girl, Mucozo treated Ortiz kindly. He even risked war with Hirrihigua and gave up his hopes for the marriage by his refusal to deliver up the captive.

After eight years with Mucozo, Ortiz became greatly assimilated. When DeSoto arrived in Florida, the kindly chief sent Ortiz to him as a messenger of peace and to rejoin his countrymen. The captive rejoiced at the prospect of rejoining the Christians but, unfortunately, he had forgotten his native language. The Spaniards mistook him for an Indian and would have killed him had he not made himself known as a Christian by means of the sign of the cross.⁷

Although Ortiz welcomed the opportunity to rejoin his own people, it is probable that this early sixteenth century captive was the first European to become partially

6 The annals of frontier literature contain several references to captives owing their lives to the intercession of Indian women. In this instance Hirrihigua's daughter preceded Pocahontas by more than a century.

7 Garcilaso de la Vega, The Florida of the Inca, 64-79.

assimilated into an Indian tribe. Had the DeSoto expedition not passed his way, it can be assumed that his transculturation would have advanced at an increasing rate. Probably he would have lived out his life as a white Indian.

Captivity of Elizabeth Hanson

One of many women captured in New England by Canadian Indians was Mrs. Elizabeth Hanson, a young New Hampshire housewife. Taken captive on June 27, 1724, she remained with the Indians and French for about a year. Her narrative provides one of the best insights into the capriciousness of Indians, a trait which frequently determined whether a captive died a fiery death or lived as a cherished adopted relative.

The Indians killed and scalped two of Mrs. Hanson's children, but on the long march to Canada the red men offered Mrs. Hanson much assistance. The leader of the party carried such a load of plunder that other Indians had to help him up with it, but he managed to carry Mrs. Hanson's baby for her when she became too weary to do so. In crossing the mountains during the 26 day journey he pulled her up steep slopes by hand or pushed her in front of him so that she could maintain the pace. Without his assistance she and her small children would have died on the trail.

At last the captives reached the Indian village. Then Mrs. Hanson's older children were sent away to other towns, leaving only her baby and a small boy with the distraught mother. At that time the captor who had shown not a little compassion during their sufferings, had a change of attitude. When he came home from hunting without having killed any game he became increasingly reluctant to share the scanty food supply with the captives. Seeming to blame them for his lack of success on the hunt, he struck the little boy and drove the captives from his lodge. The warrior's mother took pity on them, treated them kindly in her own lodge, and tried to shield them from her son's wrath.

Then, one day the old woman announced sadly that her son had decided to put Mrs. Hanson to death. Her only chance of survival would be to avoid him until his anger subsided. The captives immediately hid themselves in a shelter of boughs concealed in the snow. Fortunately, within a few days the warrior's attitude took a different turn and he decided to sell the captives rather than kill them. He took Mrs. Hanson to Fort Royal and offered to sell her to a Frenchman for 600 livres. The Frenchman objected that the price was too high. At this refusal the Indian flew into a rage and threatened to burn the captives within full view of the town. The Frenchman secretly reassured Mrs. Hanson that he would redeem them, but he told the Indian to make his fire and offered to help him

collect the wood. His bluff having failed, the warrior agreed to release the prisoners for 600 livres.

Mrs. Hanson's narrative illustrates the fact that a captive's life could depend upon chance or whim. Especially during the attack and the retreat to the Indian village, a prisoner's fate hinged upon circumstance and caprice. Some raiders desired to avenge the deaths of lost relatives, while others intended to kidnap victims to hold for ransom. Life or death for the captive thus depended upon which warrior laid hands on him first. Even those captives intended for ransom could lose their lives if they showed weakness, if pursuers threatened to overtake them, or if the Indians obtained liquor.

One other aspect of Mrs. Hanson's captivity is worthy of mention--the absence of rape among eastern Indians. "The Indians are very civil towards their captive women," she reported, "not offering any incivility by any indecent carriage, (unless they be more overcome in liquor,) which is commendable in them."⁸

Captivity of David Boyd

David Boyd, a 13-year-old western Pennsylvania lad of Scotch-Irish descent, was captured by the Delaware

⁸ Elizabeth Hanson, "God's Mercy Surmounting Man's Cruelty," in Samuel G. Drake (ed.), Tragedies of the Wilderness (Boston: Antiquarian Bookstore and Institute, 1846), 114-26.

Indians and adopted into the tribe. Few narratives of captivity better illustrate the love which developed between Indian parents and an adopted white son than David's oral account of his experiences as transcribed by his grandchildren.

David was captured on February 10, 1756, and remained with the Indians until 1760. The raiders killed his mother and baby brother and forced him to carry their scalps on the journey to the Indian village. In spite of this cruelty, David quickly developed a feeling akin to friendship for one of the Indians, a chief who secretly gave him food to eat along the way. This act of kindness, the first of many by the old chief, was an opening wedge in an attempt to influence him to embrace Indian civilization.

For some time after David's arrival at the Delaware village the Indian boys amused themselves by making him run the gauntlet. Finally his friend, the chief, told him that if he could defeat one of the boys in a fist fight the others would stop tormenting him. The next day when the boys renewed their harassment he turned on the leader and thrashed him soundly. Then several warriors raced toward him with tomahawks raised. Ignoring the threat, David continued to punish his enemy. Pleased by his bravery, they put aside their weapons and patted him vigorously saying, "make fine Indian."

In January 1757 David's friend, the chief, adopted him. The Indians dipped him into the river three times while chanting "go down white man, come up red man." Then they shaved his head and dressed him in Indian style. This ceremony was extremely effective in facilitating assimilation. When David saw his reflection in the water, he was amazed at his new appearance and began to believe that the adoption ceremony had actually transformed him into an Indian. During the festivities the Indians opened a keg of whisky. Then the chief withdrew with his newly adopted son, fearing that some drunken warrior might attack the boy. His wife welcomed him as her son and did her best to make him content.

Following his adoption, David quickly accepted Indian civilization as his own. Believing that every member of his white family had been killed or captured, he felt that he had no home except with the Indians. And he pointed out that at his age any boy would have enjoyed Indian life, roaming the woods, hunting and fishing, and learning to become a warrior. His adopted father knew, however, that David's white father had escaped from the raiders and still lived on the farm where David had been captured. When the chief's wife died, the old man became increasingly melancholy, believing that his own time of death was approaching. Overcome with remorse for having

stolen the boy and concerned for David's future, after lengthy deliberation he decided to return him to his white father.⁹

In the spring of 1760 the old chief loaded two ponies with furs and he and David set out for the settlements. The Indian risked death during this journey, for the Pennsylvania frontiersmen were so inflamed against the red men that they could be expected to ignore his flag of truce. When they reached Carlisle, they encountered an uncle of David's. This man seized the boy and was barely prevented from killing the chief. The old Indian had planned to present the boy to his white father at Shippensburg but was not allowed to proceed. He then sold the ponies and furs and gave the money to David, instructing him to buy white man's clothing in order to make himself presentable.

When David reached home, he found it difficult to resume life as a white boy. He missed the wild, free life of the Indians and was greatly dissatisfied by life on the farm. It was necessary to stand guard over him for a long time before he gave up his determination to rejoin his adopted people.¹⁰

9 This is the only instance this researcher could find of such a decision.

10 Mrs. Elvert M. Davis, "History of the Capture and Captivity of David Boyd From Cumberland County, Pennsylvania, 1756," Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine, XIV (1931), 28-39.

Captivity of Barbara Leininger

Barbara Leininger was the 12-year-old sister of Regina, the "German captive," whose experiences were described in an earlier chapter. Along with a 12-year-old girl friend, Marie LeRoy, she was captured at Penn's Creek, Pennsylvania, on October 16, 1755, and taken to the Indian town of Kittanny. After four years of captivity, the two girls escaped. Their account of their adventures is one of the best examples available of female captives' willingness to risk death by excruciating torture in order to regain their freedom.

The experiences of these girls show how precarious the safety of captives could be during the return of a raiding party to its native villages. A Delaware warrior named Galasko acquired Barbara Leininger and Marie LeRoy and two stolen horses. He permitted the girls to ride while he walked on the trail to his village, but his kindness turned to cruelty when Barbara tried to escape. He overtook her almost immediately and threatened to burn her to death. Because of the intercession of a young Indian, however, Galasko agreed to spare her life.¹¹

Upon arrival at the village Barbara and Marie were welcomed according to Indian custom. It consisted of three blows each on the back. They were, however, administered

¹¹ Leininger and LeRoy, Narrative, 407-409.

with great mercy. Indeed, Barbara recalls, "we concluded that we were beaten merely in order to keep up an ancient usage, and not with the intention of injuring us."¹²

During her first year of captivity Barbara suffered more from a general shortage of food than from the hard labor assigned to her. Then, in September 1756, the situation changed abruptly. Led by Colonel John Armstrong, an army of frontiersmen attacked and burned the town and redeemed 11 captives. The Indians fled into the wilderness, taking the remaining captives with them. Barbara witnessed the torture of several prisoners who had tried to escape during the battle. The Indians scalped one woman, laid flaming fagots upon her body, and cut off her ears and fingers and forced her to eat them. Her ordeal lasted most of the day. Finally, a French soldier shot her to put an end to her torment. Then the Indians prepared to burn a male prisoner who had just been recaptured. For three hours he walked around a stake, attempting to evade burning brands thrust at his body. When a downpour of rain prevented the Indians from keeping up the flames, they amused themselves by firing gunpowder at his body. "At last, amidst his worst pains, when the poor man called for a drink of water, they brought him

12 Ibid., 409.

melted lead, and poured it down his throat. This draught at once helped him out of the hands of the barbarians, for he died on the instant."¹³

After witnessing such scenes, it becomes readily apparent why many captives became too terrified to attempt to escape:

It is easy to imagine what an impression such fearful instances of cruelty make upon the mind of a poor captive. Does he attempt to escape from the savages, he knows in advance that, if retaken, he will be roasted alive. Hence he must compare two evils, namely, either to remain among them a prisoner, forever, or die a cruel death. Is he fully resolved to endure the latter, then he may run away with a brave heart.¹⁴

Barbara and Marie, regardless of the horrors they had witnessed, refused to abandon hope of escape. Following the burning of Kittanny, the Indians sought protection and food from the French at Fort Duquesne. There the girls worked for French families while their Indian owner collected their wages. After the Delawares suffered a sharp defeat at the Battle of Loyalhannon on October 12, 1758, they abandoned most of their towns and moved to Mosckingo, more than 150 miles to the west. It was then that Barbara and Marie decided to make their attempt to escape. They enlisted the aid of two young male captives, David Breckenridge and Owen Gibson, and fled on

13 Ibid., 410-411. 14 Ibid., 411.

the night of March 16, 1759.¹⁵ Barbara wrote of her apprehensions as follows:

It is hard to describe the anxious fears of a poor woman under such circumstances. The extreme probability that the Indians would pursue and recapture us, was as two to one compared with the dim hope that, perhaps, we would get through in safety. But, even if we escaped the Indians, how could we ever succeed in passing through the wilderness, unacquainted with a single path or trail, without a guide, and helpless, half naked, broken down by more than three years of hard slavery, hungry and scarcely any food, the season wet and cold, and many rivers and streams to cross?¹⁶

But the four young escapees were as resourceful as they were of "brave heart." They traveled at night, crossed the numerous rivers on rafts, and killed game with a tomahawk. After a trip of almost 200 miles in two weeks, they reached safety at Pittsburgh.¹⁷

Barbara's captivity narrative describes several incidents which merit analysis. Not many 12-year-old girls would have tried to escape alone during the journey to the Indian village. For her temerity she says that she would have suffered death by the most terrible torture had she not been saved, in a reverse of the Pocahontas legend, by a young warrior's plea for her life. It seems probable, however, that her captor threatened her with death to prevent other attempts at escape but would not have burned her because of her age and sex.

15 Ibid., 411-13. 16 Ibid., 414.

17 Ibid., 415-16.

Upon reaching the Delaware town she apparently experienced a symbolic and humane form of running the gauntlet, the ordeal which frequently injured male captives so severely that they became unfit for adoption. In no other narrative has this researcher seen reference to a ceremonial laying on of three light blows to the back. If she correctly ascribes the act to keeping up an ancient usage, it probably reflects ceremonial practices unique to the Delawares, a nation considered by all of the eastern Algonquian tribes to have been their "grandfather."

Her experience of working for a French family for wages paid to her Indian master was unusual for the mid-eighteenth century, although forced employment was common a half century earlier among captives taken to Montreal or Quebec. While thus employed at Fort Duquesne she refused to be ransomed, because "she could not abide the French" and she considered chances better to escape in the forest than in the fort. Such a decision required tremendous courage and, while it must have seemed foolish to the French people who could have protected her, the success of her flight to Pittsburgh proves that she possessed wisdom as well as bravery and self-reliance.

Captivity of John M'Cullough

John M'Cullough was eight years old when captured on July 26, 1756, near Fort Loudoun, Pennsylvania, by Delaware Indians. A warrior adopted him to replace a

brother who had been killed. After remaining with the Indians several years, he met Andre Wilkins, a trader, who told John's father of his whereabouts. Mr. M'Cullough twice entered the Indian country, but on neither occasion did he succeed in bringing his son home. Eventually, the Bouquet Expedition forced the Indians to release the boy.¹⁸ After his redemption, John wrote an account of his captivity. It provides one of the best illustrations of the determination of captives to resist return to their white families.

As soon as John's father learned of his whereabouts he went to Fort Venango, prepared to purchase the boy's freedom. He sent word to John's Indian brother to bring the boy to the fort. John did not know of the plan or he would have hidden himself in the woods. While John waited outside, his Indian brother entered the fort and accepted the ransom money. The narrative of John's captivity relates how he felt about this unexpected turn of events:

He told me that I must go home with my father, to see my mother and the rest of my friends; I wept bitterly, all to no purpose; my father was ready to start; they laid hold of me and set me on a horse, I threw myself off; they set me on again, and tied my legs under the horse's belly, and started away for Pittsburg; we encamped about ten

¹⁸ John M'Cullough, "A Narrative of the Captivity of John M'Cullough," in Archibald Loudon (ed.), Selections of Some of the Most Interesting Narratives of Outrages Committed by the Indians, I (Carlisle, Press of A. Loudon, 1808), 252-86.

or fifteen miles from Venenggo; before we lay down, my father took his garters and tied my arms behind my back; however, I had them loose before my father lay down; I took care to keep it concealed from them by keeping my arms back as if they were tied. About midnight, I arose from between my father and John Simeons, who was to accompany us to Pittsburg; I stepped out from the fire and sat down as if I had a real necessity for doing so; my father and Simeons arose and mended up the fire; whilst they were laying the chunks together--I ran off as fast as I could.¹⁹

John made good his escape even though his father had prepared for such an event by bringing along a trail dog. He ran to the Indian village and the warriors concealed him. When his father arrived the next day they denied having seen him. They promised, however, to bring him to Pittsburgh as soon as possible. Mr. M'Cullough waited in Pittsburgh in vain, for the Delawares took John along on their extended fall hunt.

John remained with the Indians two more years. He witnessed the murder of a number of traders but did not take part in any raids. After Colonel Bouquet invaded the Indian country, John was among the first captives surrendered under the terms imposed upon them.²⁰

Captivity of John Hunter

John Hunter was captured about 1801 by Kickapoo Indians, probably in Missouri. He retained no memory of his white family. He never knew his real name, but he

19 Ibid., 276-77. 20 Ibid., 277-86.

became so adept at killing game with a bow and arrow that the Indians called him "Hunter," and he retained the name.

After living with the Indians many years, Hunter had to flee when he warned a party of white men of an impending massacre. At the approximate age of 20 he enrolled in school and quickly exhibited a talent for writing. He traveled to the East and to Europe, being acclaimed in the highest circles as the personification of the noble savage. One of his foremost admirers was Robert Owen, and he associated with British nobility, including the king. While in England he wrote his narrative, which was published in 1823. Soon afterwards he returned to America, determined to save the Indians from destruction by teaching them to walk the white man's road. Four years later, in an attempt to help the Cherokee in Texas, he became involved in a tribal dispute connected with the Fredonia Rebellion and an Indian shot him to death in an ambush.

Hunter's account of his experiences, especially those relating to contacts with other captives, is useful in analyzing the effect of kind or cruel treatment on assimilation. His earliest distinct recollections are of his association with two other captive children, a boy and a girl. One day the little girl cried and a warrior murdered her with his tomahawk. The killer then threatened Hunter with a similar death, an experience which kept him terrified for a long time.

Not long after the girl's death, the Indians separated Hunter from the other captive and he never saw him again. As observed by Barbara Leininger and several other redeemed captives, the separation of white prisoners was the general practice. Hunter believed that the practice "originated more with a view to hasten a reconciliation to their change" than as a manifestation of cruelty. The strategy succeeded in Hunter's case, for after the disappearance of the other boy he became terrified at the thought of being abandoned to die by the Indians, and he made every effort to keep up with them during their long marches through the wilderness. Thus he quickly began to regard the red men as protectors rather than oppressors.

Subsequent relationships with white captives were instrumental in destroying any remaining desire to return to his own people. Indian children taunted young captives, saying white people were all squaws. As a result, captives curried favor with their captors by imitating the Indians and demonstrating disdain for each other. Of particular note in this regard was a white woman who joined in scalp dances with more enthusiasm than the Indians themselves. Hunter at first hoped that this woman would befriend him, but she refused to so much as take note of his presence.

Hunter's life with the Kickapoos came to an abrupt end when the Kansa Indians captured him during a battle. His new captors treated him kindly and a family adopted him to replace a son killed in battle. His adopted mother treated him as her natural born son, and when she died he sadly mourned her loss:

She was indeed a mother to me; and I feel . . . gratitude at the recollection of her goodness and care of me during this helpless period of my life. I have no hope of seeing happier days than I experienced at this early period of my life...with the Kansas nation.²¹

Captivity of John Rodgers Jewitt

John Jewitt was born in England in 1783. At the age of 20 he sailed on the ship Boston to China by way of the Pacific Coast of North America. On March 12, 1803, the ship arrived at Nookta Sound to trade trinkets to the Indians for furs which would be exchanged for valuable

²¹ John D. Hunter, Manners and Customs of Several Indian Tribes Located West of the Mississippi (Minneapolis: Ross & Haines, 1957), 12-35. The authenticity of Hunter's narrative has been disputed for a century and a half. His veracity was attacked first by Lewis Cass in 1825. Other authorities on Indians who charged him with being an imposter were William Clark and Auguste Chouteau. A staunch defender was George Catlin. Among historians his chief detractor was Reuben Gold Thwaites (See Early Western Travels, XVIII, 368n.) The ethnologist, John R. Swanton, has declared the narrative to be of the greatest value, however, and it is included here for that reason. For further reading on the career of John Hunter, see Berry Brewton, "The Education of John Hunter," Social Science, XV (July 1940), 258-64; Richard Drinnon, White Savage, the Case of John Dunn Hunter (N. Y., Schocken Books, 1972).

goods in China. The captain insulted Chief Maquina of the Nootka tribe, and the Indians seized the ship and beheaded every man on board except Jewitt (an armorer) and one Thompson (a sailmaker) whose skills could be used. The chief protected them from the warriors who wanted to kill them. He became fond of John and treated him well. John eventually became an adopted member of the tribe and a slave owner, as was the custom among the Indians of the Northwest Coast. Finally, after two years with the Nootkas, he and Thompson escaped to a passing ship.²²

John kept a journal during his captivity. It is unique among narratives examined for this study, not only because of the rarity of white captives among the Indians of the Northwest Coast, but also because of the frank account of enthusiastic participation by captives in the activities of a culture which they refused to embrace. As an example, Jewitt and Thompson became fierce warriors and slave holders, apparently feeling no remorse for their actions:

The Aytcharts, taken by surprise, were unable to resist. Except for a few who escaped, all were killed or taken prisoner. I had the good fortune to take four captives. Maquina, as a favor, permitted me to consider them as mine, and occasionally employ them in fishing for me. Thompson, who thirsted for revenge, succeeded in killing seven stout fellows, an act which won him the admiration of Maquina and the chiefs.

22 John Rogers Jewitt, "The Headhunters of Nootka," in Frederick Drimmer, Scalps and Tomahawks (New York: Coward-McCann, 1961), 216-55.

After putting to death all the old and infirm of either sex and destroying the buildings, we re-embarked for Nootka with our booty. We were received with great joy by the women and children, accompanying our war song with a most furious drumming on the houses.²³

Another unusual facet of Jewitt's narrative in his account of his captor's attempt to expedite his assimilation through a forced marriage.

He said the sooner I adopted their customs the better, and that a wife and family would make me more contented with their mode of living. I objected strongly, but he told me that, should I refuse, both Thompson and myself would be put to death. He added, however, that if none of the women of his tribe pleased me, he would go with me to some of the other tribes, where he would purchase for me any woman I would select. With death on the one side and matrimony on the other, I thought proper to choose the lesser of the two evils.²⁴

Although John was reluctant to marry, he conceded that he was fortunate in his choice of brides. The daughter of a chief, she was the most attractive girl among the neighboring tribes, very clean and neat, and always affectionate and attentive to his needs. "With a partner possessing so many attractions, many may conclude that I must have found myself comparatively happy," he wrote. "But a compulsory marriage, even with the most beautiful and accomplished person in the world can never prove a source of real happiness. I could not but view

23 Ibid., 241-42. 24 Ibid., 242.

my marriage as a chain that was to bind me down to this savage land."²⁵

The chief's next step in attempting to force the captives to accept Indian civilization was a decree that they must wear native garb. John strongly objected to this ultimatum, correctly anticipating that the scanty Indian clothing would provide little protection against the cold. In a short time he became seriously ill and informed the chief that if he could not resume wearing European clothing he would die from exposure. As the chief sorely missed his weapons-making capabilities, he consented to John's request and even permitted him to send his wife home to her father. The girl departed sorrowfully and left her two slaves to take care of John's needs.²⁶

The Jewitt captivity narrative is valuable because of its focus on one reason for captive-taking which is seldom mentioned by other redeemed prisoners--that is, in order to secure the captives' skills which would be of value to the tribe. In all probability, this unusual motivation was caused by the unique acquisitive nature of peoples belonging to the Northwest Coast culture area. These tribes were the most property conscious of all North American native peoples. They raided each other constantly

25 Ibid., 244. 26 Ibid., 245-46.

to obtain property, including slaves, until the potlatch evolved as a less violent method of proving one's superiority. Although as with most other tribes a captive's fate frequently was determined by caprice, the Indians of the Northwest Coast may have been more inclined than other red men to calculate the potential utility of a captive in creating wealth for his captor.

Captivity of Mrs. Sarah Ann Horn

Mrs. Sarah Ann Horn was born in Huntington, England, in 1809. In 1835 she, with her husband and two small children, joined the colony of Dr. John C. Beals on Las Moras Creek, near its juncture with the Rio Grande, in southwestern Texas. The colonists, chiefly from New York, England, and Germany, lacked frontier experience, and when the Texas Revolution broke out they abandoned the settlement and fled in small groups.

The Horn and Harris families attempted to reach safety at Matamoros, Mexico, but in route they fell into the hands of the Comanches on April 4, 1836. Horn and Harris were killed. Mrs. Horn remained in captivity for more than a year until a trader redeemed her.²⁷ She wrote an account of her experiences in an attempt to obtain funds to help rescue her lost children, John, aged

²⁷ Carl Coke Rister, Comanche Bondage (Glendale: Arthur H. Clark, 1955), 105-187.

six, and Joseph, not quite five years old. Like most adult female captives of Plains Indians, she suffered too many ordeals to survive long after her redemption.

"...soon my hopes and fears shall be hushed in death," she concluded her story, and then she died.²⁸

Sarah Horn's narrative is useful in providing information on the treatment of captive women and children by a Plains tribe that held hundreds of prisoners. It also provides striking evidence of the role of Indian women in the treatment of captives:

There was one Indian woman among them, who belonged to the party that claimed Mrs. Harris for their prisoner;--she was very small in her person, and I should think not more than twenty years of age; but of all the depraved beings I have seen . . . I think she excelled. I have often seen her take her by the throat and choke her, until the poor unresisting creature would turn black in the face, and fall as if dead at her feet; and then, to finish the tragedy, her cruel master would jump on her with his feet, and stamp her, until I have thought her sufferings were at an end.²⁹

The cruelty of the Comanches to captive children is clearly established by the torture of Mrs. Horn's small sons. They tied the prisoners to the backs of mules and seldom permitted them to eat or drink. During the crossing of a stream, Joseph fell into the water. He tried to scramble up the steep bank, but a warrior stabbed him below the eye with his lance, forcing him back into the current.

28 Ibid., 184. 29 Ibid., 138-39.

With blood streaming from his face over his naked body, the boy made another effort and reached the top of the bank. A short time later several of the Indians took John and Joseph back to the stream, and when they returned Mrs. Horn thought that the boys were dead. Their bodies were distended from having been thrown repeatedly into the stream, and water flowed constantly from their noses and ears. Mrs. Horn rushed to her childrens' assistance, but one of the warriors forced her away, lashing her repeatedly with his whip. Miraculously, the boys survived.³⁰

After moving west into New Mexico, the Indians took Mrs. Horn's children from her and gave them to other Comanche bands for adoption. Joseph's adopted mother, a Mexican who had been captured as a child, treated him well. White traders attempted to redeem the family, but the Indians refused.

In June, some Mexican Comancheros (traders) tried to purchase Mrs. Horn, but her master would not sell her. They succeeded in redeeming Mrs. Harris. About three months later, the Comanches camped near San Miguel, New Mexico. There they informed Mrs. Horn that she would be sold to a trader, but she protested. "Indeed," she explained, "I felt that the only remaining tie (my dear children) which bound me to this wretched planet, was among

30 Ibid., 150-51.

them, and while this was the case, I infinitely preferred remaining with or near them, to any condition."³¹

After a year and five months of captivity, Mrs. Horn was redeemed by a San Miguel citizen. The traders then sent an expedition to try to recover the children. When they returned with information that John had frozen to death and Joseph could not be purchased at any price, Mrs. Horn abandoned hope of their recovery. She died soon afterwards.³²

An interesting facet of Sarah Horn's narrative is her comment upon the brutality of Plains Indian women toward white female captives. Similar charges have been made by other redeemed captives. Mrs. Jane Adeline Wilson, a 16-year-old Texas woman who was captured by Comanches in 1853, said that the presence of squaws led to increased torture and abuse:

I never saw them exhibit the first sign of pity to me. It made no difference how badly I was hurt, if I did not rise immediately and mount the animal which had just thrown me, they would apply their riding whips . . . or the end of a lariat to my unprotected body with the greatest violence. The squaw would also help me to rise by wounding me with the point of a spear which she carried.

Mrs. Wilson also corroborated Mrs. Horn's accusation that the Comanches often denied the prisoners food and drink:

31 Ibid., 154-67. 32 Ibid., 160-87.

I have gone two days at a time without tasting food. I suffered exceedingly from thirst; I was not allowed to drink except when in camp. We frequently crossed beautiful streams during the day, and I would beg the privilege of dismounting to quench my thirst. But the Indians would always deny my request with contempt. It was in vain I pointed to my parched tongue and head blistered in the rays of the sun. Nothing could soften them into pity, and I ardently desired death that my torments might come to an end.³³

Captivity of Olive Oatman

Olive Oatman, a 14-year-old Illinois farm girl, was the daughter of Ross Oatman, a Mormon who answered the call of the Reverend James Brewster to establish a new Zion on the Colorado River. The father, mother, and seven children traveled as part of a large wagon train to Tucson, Arizona, where a dispute caused the party to break up. On March 11, 1851, the Oatman family pushed on alone into the Arizona desert. On March 18 fierce Tonto raiders attacked them with warclubs, killing the father, mother, and four children and capturing Olive and her younger sister, Mary. They left Lorenzo, the oldest boy, for dead, but he survived and spent the next five years trying to locate and redeem his sisters. Finally, with the help of the Army and

³³ Jane Adeline Wilson, "A Narrative of the Sufferings of Mrs. Jane Adeline Wilson, During Her Captivity Among the Comanche Indians," New York Commercial Advertiser, February 2, 1854.

a Yuma Indian, he obtained Olive's release.³⁴ The story of her captivity provides one of the best accounts of the treatment of female prisoners by Indians of the South-western deserts.

The Tontos moved off into the desert, forcing the captives to follow them through a wasteland of cactus and sharp stones. Mary, unable to keep up the pace, fell and refused to go farther. When blows failed to move her, one of the warriors carried her on his back. The raiders desired to keep the girls alive in order to use them as slaves, but on their march they encountered another Indian band with different designs. This party had sustained losses in a recent battle with whites, and one warrior who had vowed to take revenge on the first white person he saw shot an arrow at Olive. For a time it appeared that the two bands would do battle over the girls, but after a lengthy argument they went their separate ways.

Olive's account of their treatment upon arrival at the Tonto village provides an insight into the humiliation and terror experienced by female captives in the Southwest. The warriors collected a pile of brush and forced the girls to climb upon it. Then, all of the villagers, male and female, danced around in a circle, striking the girls, throwing clods at them, and spitting into their faces.

34 Howard H. Peckham, Captured by Indians, 195-98.

Olive felt sure that the brush would be used as her funeral pyre, but the Indians had a different fate in store for them.

The Tontos were a primitive people made up of a mixture of Coyotero Apaches, Yavapais, and other hunting and gathering peoples roaming between the White Mountains and the Colorado River. They treated their own wives and daughters as virtual slaves, allowing them so little food that many of them died of starvation and those who survived suffered greatly from malnutrition. These wretched squaws proved to be cruel masters to their captive slaves. The Indians fed the captives refuse and scraps. The girls would have starved if they had not eaten some of the roots which their masters required them to gather for the tribe.

The girls had been about six months in captivity when a visiting band of Mohave Indians purchased them for two horses, three blankets, some vegetables, and beads. As so frequently happened when moving from one tribe to another, the captives experienced a marked change in treatment. The Mohave tribe lived by farming on river bottom land, and unless lack of rainfall prevented the usual spring overflow, they enjoyed much more stable subsistence patterns than did their neighbors who lived by hunting and gathering. Olive considered them to be much more lenient masters, lacking the cruelty that was characteristic of the Tontos.

The Mohaves were fierce warriors, however, and one of their cultural traits created a terrifying threat to the captives. It was their custom when one of their warriors died in battle to sacrifice a captive woman to furnish him a slave in the next world. Olive witnessed the crucifixion of a Cocopah captive woman, and she lived in constant fear that she would suffer a similar fate.

The Mohaves tatooed the girls to signify that they were available for marriage but did not compel them to engage in sexual union. For more than a year the captives lived in comparative comfort in the huts of their captors. Then, in 1853, the river failed to overflow the crop lands and famine brought an end to kind treatment. The Indians sent the girls to scour the desert for food. If they found any, their captors seized it for themselves. Soon Mary became too weak to scavenge. As Olive could no longer bring her any food, the younger girl starved to death.³⁵

Olive remained in captivity five additional years, and it is evident from her narrative that she was beginning to accept the Indian way of life in spite of its terrors and hardships:

To escape seemed impossible and to make an unsuccessful attempt would be worse than death. Friends or kindred to look after or care for me, I had none. . . . I thought it best to

35 J. P. Dunn, Jr., Massacres of the Mountains (New York: Archer House, n.d.), 146-64.

receive my daily allotment with submission. . . Time seemed to make a more rapid flight; I hardly could wake up to the reality of so long a captivity among savages, and really imagined myself happy for short periods.³⁶

Captivity of Nelson Lee

Nelson Lee was born in 1807. In 1855 he set out with several companions to trail a herd of horses and mules from Texas to California. About 350 miles northwest of Eagle Pass, Texas, the Comanches captured four of the drivers during a night-time raid on the camp. After three years of captivity Lee escaped by killing his captor. His narrative is included in this study because it contains a graphic description of torture of captives.³⁷

The Comanches held a council to decide upon the fate of the captives. Lee, knowing that adult male captives almost always died under torture at the hands of Plains Indians, held little hope as the guard escorted him to a site obviously designed for that purpose:

36 R. B. Stratton, Captivity of the Oatman Girls (New York: Published for the author, 1858), 231.

37 Gaines Kincaid of Austin, Texas, is writing a book about Comanche captives. He believes the Nelson Lee captivity to be fictitious. (Gaines Kincaid to J. Norman Heard, Jan. 24, 1975, in author's possession). As previously noted, Walter Prescott Webb is convinced of its authenticity. The work is cited frequently by Ernest Wallace and E. Adamson Hoebel in their standard work, The Comanches, Lords of the South Plains (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1952).

There was Aikens, Martin, and Stewart, stripped entirely naked, and bound as follows: High posts had been driven in the ground about three feet apart. Standing between them, their arms had been drawn up as far as they could reach, the right hand tied to the stake on the right side and the left hand to the stake opposite. Their feet, likewise, were tied to the posts near the ground.

Martin and Stewart were strung up side by side. Directly in front of them, and within ten feet, was Aikens, in the same situation. A short time sufficed to . . . place me by the side of the letter. Thus we stood, or rather hung, Aikens and myself facing Stewart and Martin.³⁸

Slowly a line of Indians, led by the war chief, advanced toward their victims. "Their pace was half walk, half shuffle, a spasmodic, nervous motion, like the artificial motion of figures in a puppet show." Each brave brandished a knife and a tomahawk. Suddenly, two warriors near the head of the line rushed to Stewart and Martin and scalped them. This practice, while extremely painful, removed only a portion of the hair covering the skull and usually did not kill the victims. Stewart and Martin screamed in agony as the blood flowed down their faces and dripped from their beards. Lee steeled himself for similar torture, but the Comanches circled around without touching him, each giving the war whoop as he passed.

After a few minutes rest, the warriors resumed their deadly procession. As they approached Stewart and

38 Lee, Three Years Among the Comanches, 104-105.

Martin the second time, they brandished tomahawks in the faces of the captives and then slashed pointed stones across their victims' stomachs. Amazingly, Aikens and Lee were not molested until they tried to avert their eyes from the scene. Then the Indians seized them by the hair, jerking their heads back violently and forcing them to stare at the torments of their companions. Lee believed that this act was the prelude to their own destruction.

How many times they circled round, halting to sound the war whoop, and going through the same demoniac exercise, I cannot tell. They persisted in the hellish work until every inch of the bodies of the unhappy men was hacked and covered with blood.³⁹

After two hours the Indians halted their dance and stood in a circle around the captives. Two of their leaders then began the war dance, "raising the war song, advancing, receding, now moving to the right, now to the left, occupying ten minutes in preceding as many paces." They danced in front of the doomed men for some time, then dispatched them with blows of their tomahawks.

The guards then untied Lee and Aikens and led them back to the camp. The captives could see that the Indian dogs had converged on the corpses to lap up the blood that still seeped from their bodies.⁴⁰

While such treatment of captives by Comanches was common, Ernest Wallace and E. Adamson Hoebel point out

39 Ibid., 105-106. 40 Ibid., 106-108.

that these Indians had had no opportunity to learn the white man's "so-called humanity." They killed many adult captives because they lacked prisons in which to confine them or sufficient food to provide for them. Because a warrior "gave no quarter he expected none in return."⁴¹

Captivity of Fanny Kelly

During the Civil War, thousands of settlers from northern states rolled westward in wagon trains. In 1864 one of these wagons contained a 19-year-old bride named Fanny Kelly, her husband, and a small adopted daughter. She was a native of Canada who grew up in Kansas. Soon after she married Josiah Kelly, they decided to move to Idaho. They had not gone far when Sioux warriors attacked the train and captured Mrs. Kelly. Some incidents of her interesting narrative are included here because they illustrate the precarious existence of many captives in times of stress.

The Indians took Mrs. Kelly to their village, 300 miles to the north. There the aged chief, Silver Horn, claimed her as a servant to his six wives. If she had been given to a younger man, she almost surely would have been raped, but because of his age, the chief did not

41 Wallace and Hoebel, The Comanches, 259.

molest her and the women treated her well.⁴² Then a change in the fortunes of war placed her life in great peril. General Alfred Sully invaded the Sioux country and drove the Indians into the badlands. Many warriors died in battle and their relatives sought revenge on the captive. When the chiefs and warriors met in council, she knew that her life was at stake:

Soon they sent an Indian to me, who asked me if I was ready to die--to be burned at the stake. . . . He said that he had been sent from the council to warn me, that it had become necessary to put me to death, on account of my white brothers killing so many of their young men recently. He repeated that they were not cruel for the pleasure of being so; necessity is their first law, and he and the wise chiefs, faithful to their hatred for the white race, were in haste to satisfy their thirst for vengeance; and, further, that the interest of their nation required it.⁴³

Chief after chief recommended killing the captive, demanding vengeance against the white race for invading Indian lands to hunt and trap, for sending an army to drive out the rightful owners, and for murdering the people who had sought only to defend themselves and their wives and children. Then Ottawa, an old chief, arose and saved the captive's life by urging the council to temper vengeance with justice:

42 Kelly, Narrative of My Captivity, 11-13, 75-80.

43 Ibid., 107-108.

It is the undoubted right of the weak and oppressed; and yet it ought to be proportioned to the injury received. Then why should we put this young, innocent woman to death? Has she not always been kind to us. . . ? Why, then, should we put her to so cruel a death for the crimes of others, if they are of her nation? Why should we punish the innocent for the guilty?⁴⁴

Fanny was not one of the many adult female captives of Plains Indians who considered death to be preferable to life in captivity. "Though terrible were my surroundings," she wrote, "life always became sweet to me, when I felt that I was about to part with it."⁴⁵

Captivity of Mary Fletcher

Mary Fletcher was born in Eastwood, England, on August 19, 1851. With her parents she immigrated to America in 1861. Two years later a sister named Lizzie was born in Illinois. As Mrs. Fletcher's health was poor, the family decided to move to California. In July 1865, they left Fort Laramie with a train of 75 wagons. On July 31 they camped a short distance from the other wagons on Rock Creek, Wyoming. Suddenly a band of Cheyenne Dog Soldiers attacked their wagon. The raiders killed Mrs. Fletcher and wounded her husband so severely that he never recovered. They captured Mary, aged 13 and Lizzie, aged two. Mary tried to stay with her baby sister, but a

44 Ibid., 107. 45 Ibid., 109.

warrior carried Lizzie away and they never saw each other again during captivity. The Indians told her that Lizzie had cried until they had to kill her.⁴⁶

Mary remained with the Indians for about a year. When the band returned to the reservation to collect annuities, her captor ordered her to stay out of sight. Learning, however, that a white trader had come to the village she ran toward him, begging for help. The trader, Charles Hanger, ransomed her for \$1,665. He delivered her to Major W. W. Wynkoop, Special Indian Agent, who helped her find employment in the family of Judge William L. Cook of Davenport, Iowa. In 1867 she married William E. Cook, the judge's son. Her unpublished narrative of captivity, written in longhand, is in the collection of the American Philosophical Society. An excerpt is included here because it illustrates how living conditions, as well as deliberate cruelty, played a role in making life intolerable for female captives:

As for telling my experiences with the Indians, I cannot command the language that would convey the remotest idea to one not experiencing it, of the freezing cold, sleet and rain, and the torture I would receive from these Indians, or I ought to say, fiends.⁴⁷

46 This report was false. Lizzie grew up as an Indian, married a warrior, and had several children by him. Her story will be related later in this study.

47 Mrs. A. M. Cook, Captivity Narrative, Archives, American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

They sent her out during periods of heavy snow to climb trees and strip bark to feed the pony herd. Without regard to weather conditions, she labored all day in scanty clothing, and when she returned to the lodge in the evenings her captors refused to give her a blanket to cover herself.

Unlike Fanny Kelly, Mary Fletcher would have welcomed death as a deliverance from captivity. She repeatedly begged her captors to kill her, and she believed that they refused to do so because they preferred to prolong her sufferings. She acquired a life-long hatred of Indians which made it especially difficult for her to accept the fact that her sister had married a warrior. "Yes, they were far worse than any name I can give them," she wrote. "If I could have my way about it there would not be one left alive."⁴⁸

Experiences of Nick Wilson

E. N. (Nick) Wilson was born in 1842 in Illinois. In 1850 his parents moved by ox cart to Grantsville, Utah, where they established a sheep ranch. Some Gosiute Indians worked on the ranch and Nick learned their language and admired their way of life. He was deeply distressed by the death of an Indian friend, and in later life he wrote in

48 Ibid.

his autobiography that he loved him as much as if he had been his own brother.

After Pantsuk died, I had to herd the sheep by myself. The summer wore along very lonely for me, until about the first of August, when a band of Shoshone Indians came and camped near where I was watching my sheep. Some of them could talk the Gosiute language, which I had learned from my little Indian brother. The Indians seemed to take quite a fancy to me, and they would be with me every chance they could get. They said they liked to hear me talk their language, for they had never heard a white boy talk it as well as I could.⁴⁹

The Shoshones enticed Nick into joining them by offering him a pony and telling him what an exciting life he would lead with their tribe.

My parents knew nothing about it. They would never have consented to my going. And it did look like a foolish, risky thing to do; but I was lonely and tired and hungry for excitement, and I yielded to the temptation. In five days the Indians were to start north to join the rest. . . . I went with them, and for two years I did not see a white man. This was in August, 1854. I was just about twelve years old at the time.⁵⁰

The Shoshones took Nick to their chief, the celebrated Washakie, who adopted him as a brother. His adopted mother (Washakie's mother), treated him kindly. He learned that her two youngest sons had been buried alive in a snowslide and she had dreamed that one of them would return to her as a white child. Washakie did not

49 E. N. Wilson, The White Indian Boy (Yonkers: World Book Company, 1919), 9.

50 Ibid., 11.

want war with the whites and refused to allow his tribe to capture a child, but he had consented to the plan to persuade Nick to join them voluntarily.

Nick enjoyed his life with the tribe, but at times he felt an urge to return to his white family. When Pocatello's band arrived, waving white man's scalps, anger against the Indians burned within him for the first time. But he loved his Indian mother and assured her that he preferred to remain with the tribe.⁵¹

Nick lived two years with the Indians and became strongly attached to many aspects of their way of life. When they fought Indian enemies he wanted to join in the battle. However, he was old enough when he joined the Shoshones to regard their customs with a certain amount of critical discrimination. Therefore, he became only partially assimilated.⁵²

Eventually, Washakie sent Nick home to his family in order to avoid trouble with the whites. Departing reluctantly, he promised his Indian mother that he would return at the first opportunity. But his white father persuaded him to become a Pony Express rider, a life which he liked, and gradually he lost his desire to return to the Indians. Once while he was away from home, his Indian

51 Ibid., 1, 8-9, 15, 25, 39-41.

52 Swanton, "Notes on the Mental Assimilation of Races," 498.

mother came to Grantsville looking for him. Cordially received by his white mother, she stayed at the ranch for two months, but when Nick did not come home she returned to the mountains. When he learned of this visit, he went in search of her and found that she had died. He and Washakie remained lifelong friends.⁵³

Conclusions

Based on the foregoing narratives and others, it is clear that treatment of captives varied considerably in different native American culture areas, particularly between eastern and western tribes. This is to be expected because of the tremendous differences in culture traits among tribes and regions.

In all regions, however, happenstance and caprice frequently determined a captive's fate. Death, servitude, or adoption depended upon the whim of the warrior who first touched the captive.⁵⁴ If a relative had been killed recently, the warrior might take revenge by tomahawking the first white person to fall into his hands. On the other hand, if his grief had had time to subside, he might save the captive as a replacement. The threat of death

⁵³ Wilson, The White Indian Boy, 117-18, 140, 192-96.

⁵⁴ In some cases the character of the captor was consistently cruel. Wallace and Hoebel had knowledge of a Comanche who always castrated boy captives. (The Comanches, 259-60).

hung over most captives until they achieved adoption, and even afterward if they proved to be unsatisfactory substitutes.

The treatment of captive children before adoption varied little among native culture areas. Most children received brutal treatment at the time of capture. The raiders frequently killed babies and toddlers immediately and dispatched other small children during the rapid retreat to the Indian villages if they cried, failed to keep the pace, or otherwise indicated a lack of fortitude needed to become a worthy member of the tribe. Upon reaching the village, the child might face such trials as running the gauntlet or dancing in the center of a throng of threatening Indians. The prisoner might be too seriously injured during these ordeals to qualify for adoption. If he survived and showed bravery, he was probably adopted eventually.⁵⁵

The adoption ceremony completely changed the child's status. In the eastern woodlands, adoption of children usually followed quickly after capture. In the eyes of their adopted families, these children deserved kind treatment no less than did the deceased relatives

⁵⁵ Knowles, "The Torture of Captives," 151-225; Wallace and Hoebel, The Comanches, 260, 264.

they replaced.⁵⁶ Life was less arduous in the semi-sedentary villages east of the Mississippi than on the Great Plains. The captive child probably did fewer chores than he would have been assigned by his white family. The narratives of such captives as David Boyd indicate that genuine affection developed between the Indian family and the adopted child.

The famous Moravian missionary, John Heckewelder, frequently witnessed scenes of affection between Indian families and white captive children. He reported one such instance in a letter to a friend:

When in the year 1782 at Tuscarawas while walking with the great War Chief Shingass . . . I had cast a look to where his Prisoner boys were playing with his young sons, and which he observing he asked me, "who those were that I was looking at?" "Your Prisoners," replied I. "No," said he. "I had indeed once taken them as such but they and my children play together as you see, and eat together out of one dish. Not as with the White People, who make Slaves of the Negroes because they have not their colour! They beat these about as tho they were Dogs, and so they would serve me, had they it in their power." Now the meaning of what he said, was to prove that they, the Indians, felt an attachment to the great family of Mankind--took indeed in time of

56 Wilcomb E. Washburn believes that "the varied treatment of adopted captives can be explained in the same terms in which Indian treatment of their natural children can be explained: if either group measured up to the traditional standards applied by the group, they would be treated equally; if they acted in a way which seemed to be a violation of those standards they might be badly treated or rejected." Wilcomb E. Washburn to J. Norman Heard, February 11, 1977 (in author's possession).

War, human beings Prisoners, but kept them not as slaves--on the other hand incorporated them with themselves--of course had more respect for him who created Man, and put each of his creatures (Prisoners) who by the fate of War had fallen into their hands, on a level with themselves. . . .⁵⁷

West of the Mississippi captive children experienced many hardships. Tribes dependent upon hunting or gathering for subsistence, such as those of the Plains, West, and Southwest (the Pueblos excepted), frequently experienced hunger, especially when hard-pressed by enemies. During such times, non-adopted captives were the last to be fed and the first to be blamed for tribal misfortune.

Adoption of white captives frequently was delayed in the West, and the children served their masters as menials. The sale or trade of captive children from one tribe, or band, to another occurred more frequently among western Indians, thus delaying the opportunity for affection to develop.

Probably few children suffered more than a 13-year-old Texas girl named Matilda Lockhart when captured by Comanches in 1838. At the time of her redemption two years later, her parents could barely recognize her. Battered and covered with sores, her nose burned off to the bone,

⁵⁷ John Heckewelder to Peter Ponceau, Sept. 5, 1818 (copy), Archives, American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

she related that if she fell asleep, the Indians would wake her by "sticking a chunk of fire to her flesh, especially to her nose."⁵⁸ Jeff Smith, too, charged that Apache squaws awakened him by poking flaming fagots into his flesh.⁵⁹ Martha Webster, taken in Texas by Comanches at the age of four, related that "the devils burned and whipped me, and would often tie a rope around me and throw me into the river because I cried. I have scars on my body to this day from burns."⁶⁰ LaFayette Smith fell into Comanche captivity near Austin, Texas, about 1841. So severely beaten that he could not stand alone, he was thrown into a mud hole and left to die. The Indians happened to encounter a party of Mexican traders later in the day. Realizing that they could obtain a ransom for the boy if he still lived, they returned for LaFayette and sold him for \$60 in silver.⁶¹

In regard to the treatment of white female captives taken as adults, a distinct difference is indicated between eastern and western tribes. The

58 Rister, Border Captives, 87.

59 Robbie M. Powers, "White Captives Among the Comanches," Bracketville, Texas, Mail, October 9, 1931.

60 Martha Virginia Webster Strickland Simmons, Narrative (Typescript), University of Texas Archives, Austin.

61 Lewis Jones to Mrs. Angeline Smith, September 17, 1843, ibid.

seventeenth century New England captive, Mary Rowlandson, pointed out that white women were in little danger of sexual abuse: "Though I was gone from home and met with all sorts of Indians . . . yet not one of them offered the least imaginable miscarriage to me."⁶²

Among eastern Indians, purificatory rites preceded and followed raids, and sexual continence might be required of warriors during extended periods of hostilities. The Shawnees, for instance, avoided violating women prisoners because it would anger the Great Spirit.⁶³

James Axtell credits the avoidance of rape of white women by eastern Indians to the possibility that the captive would be adopted into the family or clan. "Under the strong incest taboos, no warrior would attempt to violate his future sister or cousin. Were he to indulge himself with a captive taken in war, and much more was he to offer violence in order to gratify his lust, he would incur indelible disgrace."⁶⁴

It has been claimed that English colonial female captives were safer with Indians than with the French. An

⁶² Mary Rowlandson, Narrative of Captivity of Mary Rowlandson (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1930), 33.

⁶³ Knowles, "The Torture of Captives," 153, 177, 207.

⁶⁴ Axtell, "White Indians of Colonial America," 68.

unidentified English seaman held captive in Quebec in 1746
 kept a diary in which the following entries appear:

Wed., Dec. 17, 1746. "Died Mary the Wife of Mr. David Woodall. She has left him here with 2 Small Children and a Daughter of about 19 years Old is now in the hands of the Indians.

Sat., May 9, 1747. "This Day fair weather and warm; at about 10 A. M. Saw a young Girl without the Piquets which proved to be the Daughter of Mr. David Woodall as Mentioned the 18th of December past; She was in Company with an Indian his Squaw and 2. of his paposes; the Girl was Dressed after the Manner of the Indians with a great Quantity of Wampumpeg which the Indians Call Extraordinary Embelishments; her Father and two of her Brothers got leave to goe without the Gate to Speak with her for about 15. minutes when the Indian and his Squaw etc. march'd off and took the Girl Away with him again; About 2 hours after Came in one of the Rever'd Fathers of the Church whom Mr. Woodall would have Interested in his favour to recover the Girl out of the hands of the Indians; but the Rever'd Father's advise was-- that 't were more Safe for the Girl to remain with the Indians then to be Taken from them and brought into Town amongst the French officers where he might be very well assured She would be ruined by them. The more Shame to them who profess Christianity that a wild Barbarian Should out doe them in this point of Honour with regard to a Female Captive whose virtue they ought to protect."⁶⁵

While forcible rape of white females by Indians east of the Mississippi was rare or non-existent, women captured as adults in that region frequently became the

"The Journal of a Captive," as quoted in Isabel M. Calder (ed.), Colonial Captivities, Marches, and Journeys (Port Washington, N. Y.: Kennikat Press, 1967), 39, 61. The correct name of this family of captives is Woodwell. They were captured at New Hopkinton on the Merrimac River.

wives of warriors. It would be enlightening if more information were available regarding pressure placed on captive women to marry Indians. Francis Parkman has asserted that young women who refused to marry Indians "are treated with a singular forbearance, in which superstition, natural temperament, and a sense of right and justice may all claim a share."⁶⁶ A case in point is that of Mrs. Hannah Dennis, a young Virginia woman captured by Shawnees in 1757. She protected herself by professing witchcraft and curing the sick.⁶⁷

Dramatically different, however, is a case described by Mrs. Richard Bard, a Delaware captive in 1758. She met a woman from her home community who had been in captivity several years, had married an Indian, and had a child by him. Mrs. Bard rebuked her for sexual involvement with Indians, but the woman insisted that the Delawares had threatened to burn her at the stake if she refused. This captive insisted that all white women, once

⁶⁶ Francis Parkman, The Conspiracy of Pontiac (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1929), 364.

⁶⁷ Alexander Scott Withers, Chronicles of Border Warfare (Cincinnati: The Robert Clarke Company, 1895), 89-93.

they could speak the Indian language, were given a choice between marriage and death.⁶⁸

It is evident that hatred of Indians by frontier people constituted a strong deterrent to marrying a warrior. Captive women knew that if they consorted with Indian men, and later returned to their white families, they would be disgraced. A case of this kind involved the Smith family of Mill Creek, western Virginia. Mrs. Smith and several of her children were captured in 1758. About three years later, Smith recovered his wife. Married to a chief, she had a child by him whom she refused to abandon. Smith did not abuse his wife, but he hated the child. The boy ran away to rejoin the Indians as soon as he became old enough.⁶⁹

The living conditions of women held by eastern Indians may have been no more arduous than those of the average pioneer woman. It is possible, also, that some were better treated by the Indians than by their white families. The Indians believed this to be the case, and

68 Archibald Bard, "An Account of the Captivity of Richard Bard," in Archibald Loudon, A Selection of Some of the Most Interesting Narratives of Outrages Committed by the Indians, 11, 52.

69 Willis De Haas, History of the Early Settlement and Indian Wars of Western Virginia (Wheeling: H. Holitzell, 1851), 205-206.

some white captive women east of the Mississippi lent credence to the claim by their actions, if not by their words.

In August 1762, the Indians surrendered a large number of captives at Lancaster. An Iroquois named Thomas King spoke as follows on that occasion:

You have told us of the Six Nations that we must assist you to see your flesh and blood. We have done what we can. . . . I have got a great many of them, though at first with great difficulty. When I brought them by the English forts they took them away from me. . . and I believe they made servants of them. This the reason why I brought so few of them. No wonder they are so loath to come, when you make servants of them.⁷⁰

Comparatively few women were burned at the stake in eastern North America, death by this means being considered an honor reserved for warriors.⁷¹ Occasionally, however, after failing to take male captives, Indians inflamed with a desire to avenge deaths of relatives would burn a white woman. Such a fate befell Mrs. James Moore

70 C. Hale Sipe, The Indian Wars of Pennsylvania (Harrisburg, Telegraph Press, 1931), 825-26. One of the captives brought in by this warrior was his own wife. He was compelled to surrender her two different times. The first time she ran away immediately and arrived back at the Iroquois village before her husband did. "Brother," said King, "you know it is hard for a man to part with his wife. I have delivered her. Therefore, take care of her and keep her safe."

71 Narratives of captivity indicate, however, that the Indians frequently threatened women with a fiery death to discourage escape attempts.

and her 16-year-old daughter, Jane, in 1784. To compensate for the loss of two warriors, the Indians lashed the captives to a post and burned them to death by thrusting flaming pine splinters into their flesh.⁷²

West of the Mississippi, white female captives led a precarious existence. Albert Schwandner, a six-year-old Kinney County, Texas, boy, witnessed the murder of his mother during Comanche captivity. In a hopeless attempt to escape, she struck one of the Indians with a rock, grabbed the boy by the hand, and ran. The raiders rode her down, tied her to a tree, and killed her with arrows.⁷³

Frequently, western Indian warriors subjected captive women to sexual abuse. Carl Coke Rister asserts that a female captive became the property of the first warrior who laid hands on her. The raider might sell her to anyone who wanted her. Besides becoming a drudge in the lodge, she usually had to submit to sexual abuses. "Because of this well known fact," Rister explains, "white women along the frontier generally regarded death as preferable to captivity."⁷⁴ Richard Slotkin states that "the western tribes had no taboo against rape and, in fact," made

72 Withers, Chronicles of Border Warfare, 374.

73 Austin Callan, "When Trying Times Beset the Pioneers," Honey Grove, Texas, Citizen, March 2, 1933.

74 Rister, Border Captives, 25.

it part of their celebrations of triumph, along with the torturing and mutilation of male captives."⁷⁵

Mrs. Jane Adeline Wilson, after escaping from Comanche captivity in 1854, charged that "every indignity was offered to my person which the imagination can conceive." The obvious fact that she would give birth to a child within a few weeks did not deter the warriors from forcing their attentions upon her.⁷⁶

In 1865 Kiowas killed James Box, a Texas rancher, and captured his wife and four daughters. The raiders brained the youngest daughter against a tree when she would not stop crying. They tortured Ida, aged seven, but did not sexually molest her. They raped Mrs. Box and her two teen-aged daughters.⁷⁷

⁷⁵ Slotkin, Regeneration Through Violence, 357. Lonnie J. White describes the experiences of several white women who were raped while in captivity and gave birth to half-Indian babies in his article: "White Woman Captives of Southern Plains Indians," Journal of the West, VIII (July 1969), 327-54.

⁷⁶ Wilson, "A Narrative of the Sufferings of Mrs. Jane Adeline Wilson."

⁷⁷ Rister, Border Captives, 51. The fact that not even children were safe from sexual abuse is shown in the narrative of Carrying Her Sunshade, captured in Mexico at the age of seven by Comanches who had set fire to the school house and snatched up the children as they ran from the burning building. A young Indian attempted to rape her, but a warrior saved her, saying he would marry her as soon as she became sufficiently mature. From that time until she had his child at the age of fifteen, he protected her from rape by taking her with him wherever he went. See Wallace and Hoebel, The Comanches, 260-63, for her amazing story.

Many women redeemed from captivity in the West denied that they had been raped, claiming that some unusual circumstance had spared them. Rosita Rodrigues wrote to her father after she had been purchased from her captors by traders:

I remained a prisoner among the Comanche Indians about one year, during which time I was obliged to work very hard, but was not otherwise badly treated as I became the property of an old squaw who became much attached to me, and would not allow me to be ill treated.⁷⁸

Charges of rape were made, however, during court trials and official investigations of Indian depredations. One such instance occurred during the trial of Sioux warriors as a result of the Minnesota uprising of 1862 in which more than 800 settlers lost their lives. Mary Schwandt, aged 14, was captured by 50 warriors while trying to reach safety at New Ulm. She testified that "they took me out to an unoccupied tepee near the house and perpetrated the most horrible and nameless outrages upon my person." The girl charged, also, that her companion, Mary Anderson, who was dying from a gunshot wound in the stomach, received the same treatment.⁷⁹

While Mary Schwandt was raped by many warriors in the Sioux uprising, Josephine Meeker was raped many times

⁷⁸ Rosita Rodrigues to Miguel Rodrigues, Jan. 15, 1846, University of Texas Archives, Austin.

⁷⁹ C. M. Oehler, The Great Sioux Uprising (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959), 45.

by one warrior during the Ute uprising of 1879 in Colorado. Her father, the Ute agent at White River, died in the attack on the agency. In addition to Josephine Meeker, the Utes captured her 64-year-old mother and the young wife and two children of one of the slain government employees. All three women were raped.

Josephine Meeker testified that the warrior, Persune, kept her in his lodge 23 days. His two squaws urged her to submit, saying that "it was pretty good," and tried to make her understand that, in terms of Ute culture, Persune was paying her a high honor in becoming her protector against other Indians. This young warrior had been so attracted to Josephine that he had attended the agency school where she taught. Shortly before the attack on the agency, he had invited her to become his third wife. When word reached him of her death in Washington in 1882, he mourned as if she actually had been married to him.⁸⁰

West of the Mississippi, few, if any, white females captured as adults willingly became the wives of warriors. After being compelled to do so, however, they sometimes chose to remain with their Indian husbands. In 1838 the Santa Fe trader, Josiah Gregg, observed a Mexican woman

⁸⁰ Robert Emmitt, The Last War Trail (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1954), 210-14; Marshall Sprague, Massacre, The Tragedy at White River (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1957), 150-51, 234-38, 259, 277-84, 294, 320-21; Dunn, Massacres of the Mountains, 612-13.

among the Comanches. She had been kidnapped from the home of the Governor of Chihuahua. Her father offered a reward of \$1,000 for her release, but she refused to leave her captors. "She sent word to her father that they had disfigured her by tatooing; that she was married . . . and that she would be made more unhappy by returning to her father under these circumstances than remaining where she was."⁸¹

John Salmon (Old Rip) Ford, frontier editor and Indian fighter and a founder of the Texas State Historical Association, encountered a white woman captive among the Comanches while surveying a trail from Austin to El Paso in 1849. Her face was disfigured by scars made by a knife which showed that she had lost a husband or close adopted relative in the tribe. Ford observed that the young woman's "face seemed the personification of despair." She did not appeal to him for assistance, and he speculated that she feared her white family would not welcome home "the wife of a savage, the mother of young savages, though she was made so by force and cruelty."⁸²

The treatment of mature male captives was much alike in most North American tribes. Indians considered a captured man to have forfeited his life. Usually, he

81 Rister, Border Captives, 51.

82 John Salmon Ford, Rip Ford's Texas (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1963), 119-20.

would be killed immediately, but some especially brave enemies would be taken to the captors' village and tortured to death.

East of the Mississippi, Indians occasionally adopted mature white male captives, especially formidable adversaries, in the hope that they could make Indians of them. That was the case in 1778 when the Shawnee chief, Blackfish, captured Daniel Boone. So confident was Blackfish of the superiority of Indian civilization that he believed even Boone could be assimilated. Boone used this circumstance to advantage in saving the lives of 30 companions who fell into Blackfish's grasp while making salt at the Blue Licks, in Kentucky. On that occasion he convinced the Indians that he could persuade the entire settlement of Boonesborough to adopt the Indian way of life. Declared Boone:

Brothers! What I have promised you, I can much better fulfil in the spring than now; then the weather will be warm & the women & children can travel from Boonesborough to the Indian towns, and all live with you as one people. You have got all the young men; to kill them, as has been suggested, would displease the Great Spirit, & you could not then expect future success in hunting or war; and if you spare them they will make you fine warriors, and excellent hunters to kill game for your squaws and children. . . . spare them and the Great Spirit will smile upon you.⁸³

⁸³ Joseph Jackson, statement to Lyman C. Draper, April 1844. Draper MSS., 11 C:62 ff. Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison. Jackson was one of the salt makers.

Boone's oratory prevented an attack on the settlement. Taken to the Indian village, the salt makers, with one exception, eventually escaped or were bought by the British. Boone became Blackfish's adopted son and gave every indication of contentment with Indian life. But when he detected the Shawnees preparing to raid Kentucky, he escaped and returned to Boonesborough in time to prepare the fort for defense.⁸⁴

While eastern Indians occasionally adopted outstanding white male captives like Boone, adoption of mature white prisoners was attempted less frequently west of the Mississippi. In western native culture areas, white men captives almost invariably lost their lives except on the Northwest Coast. In that unique culture area, true slavery existed. Indian masters sometimes saved male captives because of their value as property in this most property-conscious of all Indian societies.

There were, then, notable differences in the treatment of captives in various regions. But did such differences significantly affect assimilation?

⁸⁴ Bakeless, Daniel Boone, 176. Until Boone began shooting at him, Blackfish believed that his adopted son had returned to the settlement only to fulfill his promise to persuade the white people to live with the Indians. Mistaken in his belief in Boone's assimilation, Blackfish did not fail entirely in his attempt to convert a white man to Indian civilization. One member of the salt-making party lived out the rest of his life as an Indian.

⁸⁵ Hodge, Handbook of American Indians, I, 203-206.

William N. Fenton believes that they did: "Learning a new culture requires motivation such as sympathy and kindness, which some of the narratives mention. It is never an automatic process."⁸⁶

Based upon the analysis of hundreds of cases, it appears that rarely did a child successfully resist assimilation in any native culture area. In the Ultra-Mississippi area, early adoption of children led to strong ties of affection. This circumstance probably smoothed the course of assimilation. In the West, Southwest, and Plains culture areas, captive children were treated brutally for a considerable period of time. Adoption might be delayed indefinitely while the child was traded from one band to another. In most cases, however, the captive eventually would be assigned to Indians who treated him with sufficient kindness for him to consider his new surroundings a deliverance from previous ordeals. The available evidence indicates that, at that point in the captive's life, assimilation began to occur at a much more rapid rate. Brutal treatment of captive children, therefore, delayed their assimilation but did not prevent it.

The assimilation of white adults was a great deal more difficult than the Indianization of children. Among eastern tribes, the fact that some captive women who were

⁸⁶ William N. Fenton to J. Norman Heard, February 7, 1977 (in author's possession).

reluctant to be redeemed had both white and half-Indian children proves that they had been captured as adults and had participated in Indian marriages. Yet this is scarcely conclusive evidence of assimilation. They may have loved their warrior husbands and been reluctant to part with their mixed-blood children, or they may simply have feared ostracism if they returned to white civilization.

Among western Indian tribes much more positive conclusions can be drawn as to the assimilation of mature white female captives. Very few, if any, of them became Indianized. Unlike eastern captives who lived in the lodges of semi-sedentary Indians, these western captive women lived among tribes that wandered much of the time in pursuit of the buffalo. Hardships inherent in this life, coupled with slavery and sexual abuse, proved unbearable to most of these women. To many, death seemed preferable to the Indian way of life, and many of them died.

The difference in treatment of women prisoners taken as adults in various culture areas, therefore, played only a minor role in assimilation. West of the Mississippi, women resisted Indianization or died in the attempt. In the East, it is obvious that most captive women retained the desire to return to their white families, and there is no clear evidence that any female taken beyond the age of puberty became thoroughly assimilated.

Assimilation of adult male captives was rare. Most mature men captured by western Indians lost their lives. In the eastern woodlands, men captives were sometimes held for ransom, and during Colonial and Revolutionary War times many captive men as well as women and children, were sold to the French in Canada or to the British at Detroit. Almost without exception, they chose to return home at the first opportunity. A few renegades or outlaws remained with the Indians in order to escape justice,⁸⁷ but not even the notorious Girty brothers, who spent a part of their childhoods as captives and returned to the Indians years later as British agents to lead raids into Kentucky, became greatly assimilated.

Differences in treatment of adult captives, then, did not significantly influence degrees of assimilation. Kind treatment made survival possible in an alien culture, but there is little evidence to indicate that it led to a desire to remain with the Indians. Even such deferentially treated captives as Daniel Boone, a man who long before

⁸⁷ As a case in point, Timothy Dorman was an outlaw in England before coming to Virginia. When captured by Indians near Buchannon Fort, he joined them in raiding the settlements. Once he led the Indians across the Alleghany Mountains and attacked the home of a former employer. When the Indians captured one of the girls in the family, Dorman tomahawked and scalped her. See Withers, Chronicles of Border Warfare, 341-43.

captivity learned to detest the restraints of white civilization and to enjoy many of the freedoms associated with Indian culture, retained in the end a preference for the way of life of their own people.

Chapter V

LENGTH OF TIME IN CAPTIVITY

Other factors being equal, a long captivity was more likely to lead to Indianization than a short one, and yet some captives remained with the Indians many years without losing the desire to escape, while others adopted their new way of life in a matter of months. The relationship between Indianization and length of captivity, therefore, is complex and unclear.

The following case histories, arranged in ascending order of length of time held in captivity, illustrate the degree of assimilation attained by captives remaining with Indians for brief and extended periods.

Captivity of Matthew Wright Martin

Matthew Wright Martin, aged nine, was captured during the spring of 1834 near the present site of Madill, Oklahoma. His captors, believed to have been Wichitas, tortured his father, Judge Gabriel M. Martin, to death.

Matthew had been in captivity only a few weeks when Colonel Henry Dodge and a company of Dragoons arrived at the Wichita village to negotiate a treaty. They had

redeemed three Indian children from captivity among the Osages and Dodge traded them to Matthew's captors for his release. As the boy had been adopted, the Indians gave him up with great reluctance.

The soldiers observed that Matthew was already becoming assimilated. Well satisfied with his status as an adopted Indian, he denied at first that his captors had killed Judge Martin even though he had been compelled to watch his father's ordeal.¹

After redemption, Matthew recalled with gratitude how kindly he had been treated by the warrior who eventually adopted him. This man protected him from other raiders who threatened to kill him during the retreat to the Indian village. When the boy became ill as a result of hardship and lack of food, this warrior took care of him until he recovered sufficiently to participate in the adoption ceremony. Matthew's experiences give credence to an assertion by William N. Fenton that kind treatment was crucial in initiating assimilation of children and that time had little to do with it.²

Captivity of Oliver M. Spencer

Oliver M. Spencer, another captive whose experiences illustrate the importance of kindness in initiating

1 Rister, Border Captives, 24-29.

2 William N. Fenton to author, February 7, 1977 (in author's possession).

rapid Indianization, was held a prisoner only seven months. At the age of ten, he was captured by Shawnee Indians near Cincinnati while returning home from a Fourth of July celebration in 1792. While on the way to the Indian village, he attempted to escape. The warrior who had captured the boy aimed a rifle at him, but a Mohawk who lived with the Shawnees saved his life and became his new owner. Unlike the captor of Matthew Martin, a bereaved Plains Indian in search of a replacement for a lost relative, this woodland warrior was motivated by mercenary considerations. In his view, it was foolish to turn down a profit by killing a captive who could be held for ransom. Because Spencer had been severely beaten and forced to walk barefooted through brambles for 100 miles, he reached the village in critical condition. To protect his investment the Mohawk turned him over to an aged medicine woman, Cooh-coo-cheeh, and her granddaughter, Sotonegoo, to nurse back to health. They treated him kindly and a mutual affection developed almost immediately.

Within a few months the boy began to enjoy aspects of the Indian way of life:

I had now acquired a sufficient knowledge of the Shawnee tongue to understand all ordinary conversation and, indeed, the greater part of all that I heard (accompanied, as their conversation and speeches were, with the most significant gestures); and often in the long

winter evenings listened with much pleasure and sometimes with deep interest to Cooh-coo-cheeh, as she told of the bloody battles of her nation, particularly with the Americans.³

In February 1793, a British agent from Detroit purchased the boy from his Mohawk master. Cooh-coo-cheeh and Sotonegoo were distressed at his leaving. The old woman had begun to regard him as a son and she urged him to return to visit her when he grew up. The boy admitted later that he was deeply affected by her sorrow, but he had not become sufficiently assimilated to want to remain with or return to the Indians.⁴

Captivity of John Leeth

John Leeth, an orphan youth, experienced one of the least painful captivities on record. His immediate adoption saved him from torture and, although he remained a prisoner for only eight months, he lived with the Indians voluntarily for many years. John worked for a trader near the present community of New Lancaster, Ohio. In 1774, shortly after his arrival, warfare broke out between the Shawnee Indians and the settlers of western Virginia. The Shawnees seized his goods and threatened to kill him, but

3 O. M. Spencer, The Indian Captivity of O. M. Spencer (New York, Citadel Press, 1968), 120.

4 Ibid., 126-29.

an aged Delaware brought him to safety in his own lodge and reassured him as follows:

Your mother has risen from the dead to give you suck; at the same time pointing to his wife's breast; then laid his hand on his own breast, and said, --"Your father has also risen to take care of you, and you need not be afraid, for I will be a father to you."⁵

Shortly after John's adoption, an army of Virginia frontiersmen advanced to the Ohio. The Delawares withdrew into the wilderness, tying John's hands to prevent his escape. As soon as hostilities ended, the old Indian informed him that he could return to his own people, but the youth liked the Indian way of life. Still considering himself a member of the tribe, he resumed his life as a trader. In 1779 he married a captive, named Salley Lowery, and they lived among their adopted people for many years.⁶

Leeth's narrative illustrates how quickly Indian civilization could make a permanent appeal to an adventurous 17-year-old. He did not become a white Indian, but he chose to live most of his days as a white man among Indians.

Captivity of Anna Metzger

Anna Metzger, aged 11, was the daughter of Peter Metzger, a German who settled in Gillespie County, Texas.

5 John Leeth, A Short Biography of John Leeth (Cleveland, Burrows Brothers Company, 1904), 27.

6 Ibid., 7-34.

In 1864 Kiowa Indians captured Anna and murdered her sister. She remained with the tribe only nine months before being redeemed by a trader.

Anna became a servant to the chief's two wives, one of whom treated her cruelly and the other kindly. Her most pleasant task was to look after the Indian children. "The older ones chattered to me," she recalled, "and I readily learned their language." Anna's experiences illustrate how quickly friendships could develop between a young captive and an Indian child, a factor which almost certainly assisted assimilation: ". . . there was a little Indian girl who was an unswerving friend of mine. . . . In all my troubles she showed her devotion, though often at the cost of a severe beating to herself. I shall never forget her words of healing sympathy at times when they were so much needed by me."⁷

Anna retained a strong desire to return home and risked death to run away from the Indians to a trader's house. Nevertheless, it is a remarkable fact that in less than a year she learned the Indian language and almost forgot her own. "I had forgotten my language to a great extent," she admitted, "understanding what my brother . . . said, but in some ways I could not speak the German words.

⁷ J. Marvin Hunter, The Bloody Trail in Texas (Bandera, Texas, J. Marvin Hunter, 1931), 170-71.

I made myself understood by means of gestures. In this I had become very proficient."⁸

Captivity of Santiago McKinn

Santiago McKinn was captured by the famous Apache raider, Geronimo, in 1885. When Geronimo surrendered in March 1886, McKinn was with him, and the Army took charge of the boy. Although the captive had been with the Apaches only ten months, he had already become thoroughly assimilated. Charles F. Lummis, scholar and newspaper editor, witnessed the surrender, and he reported that Santiago was wilder than the Indian boys. The 11-year-old captive had already become fluent in the Apache language and had either forgotten or refused to speak Spanish or English. He "acted like a wild young animal in a trap," insisting that he wanted to remain with the Indians and wailing in anguish when the wagon carried him away from the fort on the journey home to his parents' ranch.

Lummis noted that the Apaches loved children and treated them well. They had treated the young captive as kindly as if he had been a natural-born Indian. As Geronimo's band remained constantly on the move to avoid the troops, Santiago had experienced long marches across deserts and mountains, but his enjoyment of the wild, free

8 Ibid., 178.

life more than compensated for the hardships encountered. His case provides one of the most remarkable examples available of the rapidity of the Indianization process.⁹

Captivity of Frank Buckelew

Frank Buckelew was born in Louisiana in 1852. Orphaned at an early age, he went to live with a sister on the Sabinal River in western Texas. At the age of 13, he was captured by Lipan Indians, and he remained a prisoner for 11 months. The Lipan chief, Custaleta, could speak English. He informed the boy that the tribe tortured all white captives except Germans to death. Frank refused to deny his English ancestry and a brave show of defiance won Custaleta's admiration.

Although Buckelew retained his desire to return to white civilization, it is evident that he acquired some traits of Indian culture. Repulsed at first by the food that they ate, in a short time he began to enjoy his meals,

9 Charles F. Lummis, General Crook and the Indian Wars (Flagstaff, Arizona, Northland Press, 1966), 45-46. A similar instance was reported by Jane Wilson. Her two young nephews, captured by Comanches, were given bows and arrows and mounted on fine horses during their second day in captivity. "Their faces were painted in Indian fashion, and they looked like young savages. They appeared to enjoy this new mode of life, and were never treated with excessive cruelty." (See "A Narrative of the Sufferings of Mrs. Jane Adeline Wilson, During Her Captivity Among the Comanche Indians," New York Commercial Advertiser, February 3, 1854).

including raw meat. He quickly became adept at the use of the bow and arrow, and he developed an attachment for Chief Custaleta.¹⁰

Buckelew's experiences indicate that captives differed in the rapidity of their adoption of various Indian culture traits. While most young captives learned Indian languages in an amazingly short time, Buckelew was slow in acquiring the ability to master the difficult Athapascan pronunciation. On the other hand, Buckelew learned the hunting techniques of his captors, which were essential for survival in the Mexican mountains where he was held until he escaped in 1866.

Captivity of Rachel Plummer

Mrs. Rachel Plummer was captured by Comanche Indians at Fort Parker Limestone County, Texas, on May 19, 1836. Taken, also, were her 15-month-old son, Jimmy; her eight-year-old niece, Cynthia Ann Parker; and her seven-year-old nephew, John Parker. All three of the children became white Indians, but the young mother detested and rejected every aspect of Comanche culture.

¹⁰ F. M. Buckelew, Buckelew, the Indian Captive (Mason, Texas, printed by the Mason Herald, 1911), 19-26, 44-47, 73, 96-104. For an interesting discussion of the crucial importance in assimilation of overcoming loathing of Indian food, see Richard Van der Beets' "The Indian Captivity Narrative as Ritual," American Literature, XLIII (January 1972), 555-57.

The Comanches separated the captives and Mrs. Plummer never saw the children again. Five months after her abduction, she gave birth to a child. As white infants had little value to Plains Indians, a warrior choked it until it stopped breathing. The desperate mother managed to revive it, but the Indians threw it into the air, permitting it to fall on frozen ground until it died.

Mrs. Plummer became the property of an old Indian whose wife and daughter treated her as a slave. After a year of captivity, a party of Santa Fe Comancheros redeemed her, but rescue came too late. Unable to adjust to constant moving, icy weather, and cruel abuse, she had lost the desire to live. While confined to bed, she wrote an account of her experiences which closed with prophetic words: "With these remarks, I submit the following pages to the perusal of the generous public, feeling assured that before they are published, the hand that penned them will be cold in death." She died within the year.¹¹

Mrs. Plummer's experiences, like those of Mrs. Sarah Horn, indicate an immediate and complete rejection of Indianization. Not even redemption could undo the effects of a year of exposure to Indian civilization. As mature females, they had become too firmly fixed within the bounds

11 Rister, Border Captives, 68-76.

of their own culture to cross over into a way of life which they had been conditioned to regard as savage, sub-human, and revolting.

Captivity of Alexander Henry

Alexander Henry, like Rachel Plummer, was an adult when captured by Indians. Like Mrs. Plummer, he remained in captivity only one year, but his response to Indian civilization differed dramatically from hers.

Henry was captured by Chippewa Indians during the massacre at Fort Michilimackinac in 1763. A warrior named Wawatam saved his life and adopted him as a son. His experiences prove that even mature male captives could adjust to a new culture with surprising rapidity: "By degrees, I became familiarized with this kind of life," the captive observed, "and . . . if I could have forgotten that I had ever been otherwise . . . I could have enjoyed as much happiness in this, as in any other situation."¹²

Henry was one of many captives protected from death by an adopted father, a circumstance which must have hastened development of bonds of affection and rapidly weakened barriers to assimilation built up by years of racial animosity. And he had a second reason to be

¹² Alexander Henry, Travels and Adventures in Canada (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1966), 132.

eternally grateful, for Wawatam watched for the right opportunity and assisted his beloved white son to escape:

My son, this may be the last time that ever you and I shall smoke out of the same pipe! I am sorry to part with you. You know the affection which I have always borne you, and the dangers to which I have exposed myself and family to preserve you from your enemies. I am happy to find that my efforts promise not to have been in vain.¹³

The Indian cultural traits which Henry acquired during his brief captivity served him well in later life, for he became one of America's foremost explorers and fur traders.

Captivity of Pierre Esprit Radisson

Another great explorer and trader who escaped from Indian captivity was the French-Canadian, Pierre Esprit Radisson. Captured at the age of 16 near Three Rivers, Radisson was held by the Mohawks from the spring of 1652 to the summer of 1653. He very nearly resolved to spend his life as a white Indian.

Radisson, upon first arriving at the Mohawk village, was saved from running the gauntlet by an old warrior and his wife who adopted him. They allowed him much freedom and their daughters taught him their language and customs.

A few months after his adoption, Radisson went on a hunting expedition with three Mohawk warriors and a Huron

13 Ibid., 161-62.

captive. One night the Huron proposed to him that they kill the Mohawks and escape. Radisson was reluctant, for he enjoyed the life of his adopted people. But, as he reported in his valuable narrative, he agreed to help the Huron after he thought about the large number of friends and relatives who had been killed by the Iroquois. After killing the sleeping Mohawks, Radisson and his companion fled in a canoe. Two weeks later, a band of warriors overtook them and returned Radisson to the Mohawk town to be tortured to death. The Indians pressed blazing fagots against his flesh, but during his torments his adopted parents continued to plead for his life, and at last they secured his release.

Radisson resumed the life he had led before his escape. In a short time he decided to become a warrior, announcing his desire to attack Indian enemies and then, after some experience, to take up the hatchet against the French at Quebec, Montreal, and Three Rivers. On a raid against the Hurons, he helped massacre men, women, and children. He brought back a female prisoner as a slave for his adopted mother and two warriors' heads, which he presented as trophies to his sisters.

After a year of captivity Radisson accompanied an Iroquois delegation on a visit to the Dutch city of Orange. There the governor offered to purchase his freedom, but Radisson refused because he was reluctant to leave his adopted people. Soon after returning to the

Indian village, however, he recalled his enjoyable life before captivity and he began to regret turning down the governor's offer. At length, having made the difficult decision to leave his adopted people, he disappeared into the wilderness and made his way to freedom at Orange.¹⁴

It is evident from Radisson's narrative that within a year he had become greatly assimilated. He truly walked the thin line which separated captives who became white Indians from coureurs de bois who lived with Indians but retained a core of French civilization. His French background did battle with his love of Indian life, and for a time gratitude to his adopted parents swayed him toward remaining with the Iroquois. An unexpected incident, the visit to the Dutch city, finally resulted in rekindling in him a sufficiently strong inclination to return to European civilization.

Captivity of T. A. (Dot) Babb

In September 1865, Comanches raided the Babb ranch in Wise County, Texas, killing Mrs. Babb and taking the 13-year-old boy prisoner. He remained in captivity two years. Early in 1866 he tried to escape. Caught and threatened with death, he defied his captors so bravely that they decided to spare him. After a year of captivity, a warrior adopted him and took him on raids against other

¹⁴ Pierre Esprit Radisson, Voyages (New York, Peter Smith, 1943), 1-85.

Indians. He enjoyed the wild, free life, but he did not forget his white family and managed to send word of his situation to his father.

Babb's story is included here because of the unique opportunity he received to choose between living with his white or Indian relatives. In his case, escape was unnecessary. In 1867, through the intercession of Chief Esserhaby, his adopted father gave him the choice of remaining a Comanche or returning to his white father. The Indians were confident that Babb had completely accepted their civilization and would reject the opportunity to return to the ranch, but without hesitation the youth chose to return to his white relatives.

Later, however, the youth wavered in his allegiance to white civilization, for two years with the Indians left their mark for his lifetime. After the Comanches went on the reservation, he visited them regularly. Twenty years after he returned to the ranch, he claimed land in the Indian Territory as a member of the tribe and took his white family to live there.¹⁵

¹⁵ T. A. Babb, In the Bosom of the Comanches (Dallas, Press of Hargreaves Printing Co., 1923), 19-64. Babb was one of a considerable number of captives who shared in the division of tribal lands under the Dawes Severalty Act of 1887.

Captivity of Martina Diaz (Martha Day)

Another Texas teenager who remained in Comanche captivity two years was Martina Diaz. Her experiences were much more disagreeable than Babb's, and she had no inclination to become an Indian. She gained her freedom with the assistance of the agent, Lawrie Tatum. Held by a warrior named Black Beard, she feared for her life if she should attempt to escape. Nevertheless, when her band came to the agency for rations, she fled the camp during the night and hid beneath the front porch of the agency until morning. Tatum reported that Black Beard and other Indians watched the building all day in the hope of seizing or shooting her. Meanwhile, the agent's wife spent the day sewing dresses to replace her Comanche costume. By the end of the day, Martina's appearance had changed dramatically. No longer the semblance of an abused, wretched squaw, she had been transformed into an attractive young Mexican woman, radiant in the expectation of being restored to her own people. Her appearance deceived the Indians, and Tatum was able to slip her onto the stage without their recognizing her. When a delegation of chiefs called upon him to request her return, she was out of their reach.

Before leaving for home, Martina told Tatum of other Mexican captives in the Comanche camp who wished to escape. With this information as a starting point, Tatum recovered 11 boys and returned them to their families.¹⁶

It is evident that Martina Diaz stoutly resisted assimilation. There can be little doubt that sexual abuse was a factor in driving her to run away from her oppressor at the risk of her life.

Captivity of Arthur Campbell

Arthur Campbell, aged 15, was another captive who remained in Indian hands two years. Having volunteered for militia duty in western Virginia, in 1756 he participated in a fight against Indians from Lake Erie. While firing down on the Indians from concealment in a tree, he received a wound in the leg and fell into enemy hands. His case is unusual because he deliberately adopted Indian customs, pretending to become assimilated in order to gain an opportunity to escape.

Young Campbell was a brave and resourceful captive. While running the gauntlet, he greatly impressed an aged chief by his manly qualities. Eventually the chief adopted him. Within a few months, Campbell mastered their

¹⁶ Corwin, Comanche & Kiowa Captives, 178-83. One of these was Pres-lean-no, an adopted son of chief Parry-O-coom. The chief cried in the agency office when the little captive left for home.

language and became adept at tracking and hunting with the bow and arrow. He quickly earned the confidence of the chief and accompanied him on hunting trips.

In 1758 Campbell learned that the John Forbes Expedition against Fort Duquesne was approaching, and he determined to escape and join his countrymen. He ducked out of sight while hunting and found his way through hundreds of miles of wilderness to safety. The army at once made use of his knowledge as a guide. When he returned to Virginia, his services merited a grant of 1,000 acres. Eventually, he served in the Virginia Assembly.¹⁷

Captivity of Elias Sawyer

Elias Sawyer, a 15-year-old Lancaster, Massachusetts, youth, was captured with his father, Thomas, on October 15, 1705. His case is of particular interest, because it indicates how quickly love of an Indian girl could change a captive's attitude toward assimilation.¹⁸

¹⁷ Robert L. Kincaid, The Wilderness Road (Indianapolis, Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1947), 83.

¹⁸ Savoie Lottinville, scholar, historical editor, and Osage Sycamore, believes that love between captives and captors, rather than shame over sexual involvement with members of a hated race, prevented prisoners from wanting to return to their white families: Savoie Lottinville to author, February 17, 1977 (in author's possession).

Their Abenaki captors carried the Sawyers to Montreal, where Thomas, a blacksmith, bargained with the governor to build him a sawmill in exchange for their freedom. The governor agreed, but the Indians refused to sell them, insisting that they had sentenced Thomas to death. They tied him to a stake and prepared the fagots when suddenly a priest rushed forward, declaring that he held the key to Purgatory and that he would send all of the Indians there immediately if they did not release the prisoner.

For the next year Elias and his father worked on the sawmill. Then Thomas was permitted to return to Lancaster. Elias desired to accompany his father, but his captors retained him for another year, believing that they could assimilate him. During this second year of captivity, he fell in love with an Abenaki maiden, and when the French arranged his release he at first declined to leave the Indians. Some time later, he reconsidered and decided to go home for a visit, but he promised to return and marry the girl. His family insisted that he remain at home, however, and after some years he married a Massachusetts woman. Until the day of his death, he regretted leaving the Indians, however, and wore a love token which the Abenaki Indian girl had given to him.¹⁹

¹⁹ Coleman, New England Captives Carried to Canada, I, 310-12.

Captivity of Temple Friend

Temple Friend, a small boy, was captured by Comanche Indians in 1868 and remained with them until Lawrie Tatum obtained his release in 1872. His case illustrates how rapidly a child could lose and regain his native language. So completely assimilated that he tried to hide from his redeemers, he was unable to identify himself and Tatum placed him in the agency school while attempting to locate his relatives. The boy's grandfather, the Reverend L. S. Friend, travelled 15,000 miles in search of him, following false leads to Indian reservations in New Mexico and Arizona before Tatum summoned him after reading an advertisement in an Austin, Texas, newspaper.

Mr. Friend recognized his grandson immediately and called him by name. Although the boy had no recollection of life before captivity, he nodded when he heard the name. Temple had forgotten the English language, but he quickly regained its command while attending the agency school. Since language predominance is a major element in assimilation, it was possible for the boy to regain some recollection of his life before captivity once he could converse with his grandfather.²⁰ Having become a white Indian within a short time, he managed to revert to his original culture with equal rapidity.

²⁰ Corwin, Comanche & Kiowa Captives, 176-78; Rister, Border Captives, 143-47.

Captivity of John Gyles

John Gyles, aged nine, was captured at Pemaquid, Maine, by Maliseet Indians on August 2, 1689. The Indians captured his father, mother, one brother, and two sisters. They murdered his father almost immediately. The mother and sisters were redeemed in a few years. His brother, James, escaped but fell into Indian hands a second time, being tortured and burned to death in 1692. John made the march to Canada, living with his captor in New Brunswick for six years before being sold to the French. His case is unusual for a child his age, for he successfully resisted assimilation.

John's life at the Indian village of Meductic was threatened by visiting Micmac Indians who tortured him on several occasions. Within a year, he learned the Maliseet language and developed into a proficient hunter, but he retained a strong desire to return to white civilization. After six years, a dispute arose between his original captor and the widow of a second master to whom he had been sold. Some of the Indians suggested settling the dispute by killing the captive, but a priest arranged for his redemption by a French trader. John lived with a French family three years, serving as an interpreter. In 1698 the French permitted him to return to New England.²¹

²¹ Van der Beets, Held Captive by Indians, 104-107, 121-29.

Upon his reunion with his brothers and sisters, John immediately entered government service as an interpreter. He could speak French, Maliseet, and Micmac, and he served skillfully in this capacity for many years, being well trusted by his former captors in all matters of trade, prisoner exchange, and peace negotiation.²²

Captivity of Frank Grouard

Frank Grouard, the son of an American missionary and a Polynesian woman, was born on a South Pacific Island on September 20, 1850. His father brought him to California in 1852, and at an early age he lived with a Mormon family in Utah. At the age of 15, he ran away and worked as a freighter. Four years later, while carrying mail to Fort Hall, he was captured by Sitting Bull. He lived with the Sioux for six years before simply riding away from them to the nearest military post.

At first, the Sioux warriors wanted to kill Grouard, but Sitting Bull protected him. As he showed a sincere interest in Indian customs, these warriors became increasingly friendly, many of them believing because of his dark skin that he was a natural-born Indian who had been captured and reared by their white enemies. He proved himself to be an excellent hunter, several times

²² Coleman, New England Captives Carried to Canada, I, 169-72.

bringing in game during times of famine. By the end of his second year in captivity, he could speak the Sioux language fluently and appeared to be so completely assimilated that he was allowed to roam without restraint.

In 1872 the Indians tested Grouard's fitness for tribal membership by cutting many pieces of flesh from his arms. He withstood torture without flinching and, having proved his manhood, he obtained permission to marry an Indian girl. His marriage, instead of resulting in increased Indianization, became the indirect cause of his leaving the Indians. Some dispute arose with the girl's relatives which led him to reconsider his future and, eventually, to return to white civilization.²³

How assimilated was Grouard? He could have returned to white civilization several years earlier, but he asserted that he remained in order to learn as much as possible about the topography of the Indian country.²⁴ He enjoyed Indian life and greatly admired Sitting Bull, Crazy Horse, and other Sioux leaders. When he rode into Fort Robinson, he could barely speak English. One suspects

²³ Joe De Barth, Life and Adventures of Frank Grouard (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1958), xiv, 3-4, 30-87; John F. Finerty, Warpath and Bivouac (Chicago: Donohue and Henneberry, 1890), 99.

²⁴ Grouard gained such knowledge of the Plains and Rockies that he became one of the most valuable scouts in military campaigns against the Indians.

that had he not become embroiled in tribal factionalism and disputes with his Indian in-laws, he would have become a white Indian.

There can be little doubt, however, that Grouard became less completely Indianized during six years of captivity than did Santiago McKinn in less than a year. Like Pierre Esprit Radisson and perhaps some other captives whose cases are reported in this chapter, he reached a point on the assimilation scale where a slight change of circumstances could have resulted in lifelong attachment to Indian civilization.

Conclusions

It appears, then, that the degree of assimilation was not directly related to the length of captivity. This conclusion gains support, moreover, when the experiences of Herman Lehmann, Jeff and Clinton Smith, and many other captives are considered. While some captives became substantially Indianized in less than two years, others attempted to return to white civilization after living 20 or 30 years with the Indians. Matthew Brayton, for instance, was a captive for 34 years; he was traded seven times from tribe to tribe and did not achieve adoption for a decade. He lost all recollection of life before captivity and came to regard white people as enemies. He married an Indian and fathered half-breed children. Yet he eventually abandoned his Indian family and spent years

searching for his white relatives.²⁵ Another captive who remained more than 30 years with the Indians was Mrs. Kepple Groves. When seen in a Miami Indian village in 1791 by Colonel Thomas Procter, she was too ill to try to escape, but she begged him to get her white relatives to help her.²⁶

These case histories and others show that a lengthy captivity did not inevitably lead to Indianization. Among captives held for 30 years, some quickly adopted the culture of their captors, while others acquired Indian traits but welcomed the opportunity to return to the whites. More than 40 additional case histories showed the same scattering of results. Clearly, then, length of captivity was not the most crucial factor in assimilation.

25 Matthew Brayton, The Indian Captive (Cleveland, Fairbanks, Benedict, 1860), 11-14; Peckham, Captured by Indians, 168-83.

26 Thomas Procter, "Narrative of Colonel Thomas Procter," American State Papers, Indian Affairs, I. (Washington, Gales and Seaton, 1832), 155.

CHAPTER VI

THE CRITICAL AGE

Narratives of captivity indicate that the age when captured was the most crucial factor in determining assimilation. James Axtell has concluded that captives over 15 or 16 years old usually did not become assimilated.¹ Was there a critical age which determined the individual's inclination to remain with the Indians or to return to his white family? And if so what was it? Was the critical age the same for boys and girls? The following case studies, presented in approximate ascending order of age at time of captivity, should answer these questions.

Captivity of Tom Graves

Tom Graves was captured in infancy by Cherokee Indians. He never knew who his real parents were or where he had been captured. The Arkansas Gazette characterized him as "said to possess, to their fullest extent, all the habits and principles of an Indian or savage."² In 1820

1 Axtell, "White Indians of Colonial America," 82.

2 Arkansas Gazette, April 29, 1823.

when Major Stephen H. Long descended the Arkansas River, he shared a meal with Graves. He reported that his host appeared to be white but was unable to speak English.³

In 1821 Tom Graves led a Cherokee raiding party that attacked an Osage Indian camp occupied only by old men, women, and children. The Cherokees massacred 29 women and children and took 90 prisoners. Graves murdered three of the prisoners, a woman and two children, after they arrived at the Cherokee village. A white man named Scott witnessed the crime and reported that Graves "threw their bodies to be devoured by the hogs." Indian Agent Richard Graham charged that "this murder was perpetrated by one Graves, a white, who was taken when very young by the Cherokees and brought up by them and is now a Captain and commanded 100 of the Party and is a farther evidence to me that there is more savage verocity [sic] in the whites brought in Indian life and the half-breeds than in the genuine Indian."⁴

3 Edwin James, Account of an Expedition From Pittsburgh to the Rocky Mountains, Performed in the Years, 1819, 1820, Reuben Gold Thwaites (ed.), Early Western Travels (Cleveland: The A. H. Clark Company, 1905), XVII, 17. Volumes 14-17 of this excellent work contain an account of the Stephen H. Long expedition, written by James, which was originally published in Philadelphia in 1822. James was one of the foremost authorities on Indian civilization of his day.

4 Grant Foreman, Indians and Pioneers (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1930), 110n.

Graves stood trial at Little Rock in 1823 for these murders and others committed against Osage children. The court released him, however, for lack of jurisdiction in crimes committed on Indian land which followed tribal custom. In 1823 the Osages retaliated by killing Red Hawk, a nephew of Tom Graves. This murder prevented the establishment of peace between these tribes for many years.⁵ The experiences of Tom Graves provide an excellent illustration of the importance of a captive's inability to recall anything of his life among white people. In his case, assimilation was unnecessary, for he was an Indian in every regard except color almost from birth. Even his color was hardly an obstacle, as the Cherokees had many light skinned tribal leaders because of marriages between white traders and daughters of chiefs.

Captivity of Lizzie Fletcher

Another captive who retained no memory of a white family was Lizzie Fletcher. On July 31, 1865, at the age of two, she was captured by Cheyenne Indians at Rock Creek, Wyoming. The Indians also abducted her older sister, Mary,

⁵ Ibid., 105-10, 127. Graves continued to play a prominent role in Cherokee affairs. In 1827 he went to Washington as a delegate to settle a dispute with the Federal Government. He received \$1,200 at that time as restitution for his imprisonment while awaiting trial for the murder of the Osage children. He signed a treaty which proved to be unpopular with the tribe, and only he and George Guess (Sequoyah) among the delegates dared come home to confront their fellow Cherokees.

but separated them almost immediately. Mary regained her freedom in 1866, but Lizzie's whereabouts remained unknown for 35 years.

In 1900 a band of Arapahoe Indians visited Casper, Wyoming. One of the women aroused much curiosity because she appeared to be white. Dressed and painted in Indian fashion and unable to speak English, the woman ignored inquiries about her history. An Indian who could speak English explained that the white woman had been captured in early childhood, had been raised by the Cheyennes, had married an Arapahoe named John Brokenhorn, and had had several children by him.

Mary Fletcher (then Mrs. A. M. Cook) read an account of this incident in a newspaper and, believing that the white woman might be her sister, took the stage to the Arapahoe agency to find out. She positively identified the woman as Lizzie and urged her to rejoin her family at Davenport, Iowa. But Lizzie refused. "She declared that she was an Indian, that she was satisfied to live as she had always lived; to call a tepee her home, to wear a blanket, to do the drudgery as all the squaws were doing, and to claim a fullblooded Indian as her husband."

Sadly, Mrs. Cook returned to Iowa, leaving her long lost sister with people she hated because of her own memories of captivity. She lamented that, "although she had had many bitter experiences, when her sister refused

to give up her wild life and live like a woman civilized, it was the hardest blow she had endured since she saw her mother killed by being thrust through the body with a spear by a blood-thirsty Indian."⁶

This case illustrates how capture at an early age could lead to a preference for Indian life. Lizzie's preference was, however, not shared by her children. After they learned that they were half-white, they adopted varying degrees of white civilization. One of her sons became a preacher.⁷

Captivity of Thomas Armstrong

Another child who became a captive at the age of two was Thomas Armstrong. His case is included here because it exemplifies difficulties experienced when a child with such a heritage was exposed to white civilization. Thomas was captured in Pennsylvania by the Seneca Indians during the American Revolution. A patriot army⁸ defeated the Senecas and compelled them to release their

6 "A White Indian Woman," (typescript), American Philosophical Society Library, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. (Taken from "History of Natrona County, 1888-1922," 417-21).

7 F. S. Cook to William Ash, April 26, 1935, Archives, American Philosophical Society Library, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

8 John Sullivan's campaign against the Six Nations of 1779.

captives, but a considerable number, including Thomas, chose to remain with the Indians. While still a youth, he married a white girl, captured in infancy and so completely assimilated that an observer described her as an Indian in every way except birth.

At the time of his marriage, Armstrong lived on a reservation where he frequently came into contact with whites and acquired some use of the English language. He related that he had no recollection of life before captivity, but his appearance left no doubt of his ancestry, and he gradually developed a longing to learn about his white family. The Indians told him that he had a sister still living at the place of his capture. When about 20 years old, he went to Pennsylvania and located his sister. Although she did not recognize him, she invited him inside her house and treated him kindly. He made no attempt to converse with her, and after about an hour, he returned to the wilderness. Asked why he had not made himself known, he replied that his sister's home and its furnishings looked so grand that he always would have felt out of place in that kind of life.⁹

⁹ Orlando Allen, "Incidents in the Life of an Indian Captive," American Historical Record, I (1872), 409-10.

Captivity of John Ward

Another captive who lived with the Indians until his death was John Ward. Captured in 1758 at the age of three by Shawnee Indians, he became completely assimilated, married an Indian, and fathered several children. His case is chosen for inclusion because he had the unusual experience of fighting against members of his own white family on at least three separate occasions. As a young warrior he fired from ambush with his Shawnee companions on a force of white frontiersmen near the mouth of the Kanawha River. In that battle the Shawnees killed his father. His half-Indian daughter narrowly escaped death at the hands of his white brother, James, when the Kentucky militia made a surprise attack on the Shawnee village in 1791. A year later, the militia attacked the village again and John Ward received a mortal wound. He had lived with the Indians 34 years at the time of his death.¹⁰

Captivity of Mrs. Dixon

The Boaz Thorp family settled in the Whitewater country of Indiana Territory in 1813. In the fall of 1814, Indians caught the Thorp children at play, seized a

¹⁰ Charles McKnight, Our Western Border (Philadelphia: J. C. McCurdy & Co., 1879), 598-603.

four-year-old daughter, and carried her into the wilderness. Boaz Thorp spent several years visiting Indian villages in the role of a trader, but he could find no trace of his daughter. Many years later, however, he learned that a white woman about the age of his daughter lived in a Miami Indian village in northern Indiana. This time his quest was successful, for he identified the woman as his daughter by a scar on her body. But he could not induce her to come home. She had married a Miami Indian, known as Captain Dixon, had had several children by him, and refused to leave him despite his "profligate, dissolute, and thriftless character."

The case of Mrs. Dixon is unique among accounts of captivity located by this researcher, for she was the only captive among them who committed suicide. In 1850 a Potawatomi Indian killed Captain Dixon in a drunken brawl. About this same time, his "white Indian" wife drowned herself in the Mississinewa River.¹¹ By this act she went far beyond the practice of self-disfigurement, such as cutting off a finger, which squaws frequently performed as an act of grief over a husband's death.

¹¹ Nellie Decker Hubbard, "A Tale of Whitewater County," Indiana Magazine of History, XXVIII (1932), 188-90.

Captivity of Robert Armstrong

Another child who was captured at the age of four was Robert Armstrong. Unlike Mrs. Dixon, he retained some memory of his life with the whites and could speak a few words of English. He was captured by Wyandot Indians near Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in 1786. Adopted into the Big Turtle band, he became an expert hunter and married an Indian. A missionary who saw him said that he had become almost completely Indianized and had lost the use of English except for a few words.

But this minimum retention of the language and fleeting memories of an earlier life assisted in leading to a desire to renew his association with white people after he moved to a reservation. There he eventually regained a sufficient knowledge of English to serve some missionaries as an interpreter. He became a Christian and attempted to convert the Wyandots to that faith. His second wife was half white, the daughter of a famous captive named Ebenezer Zane.¹² His experiences show that contact with whites on or near a reservation could lead an assimilated captive part of the way back to his original civilization.

12 Finley, Life Among the Indians, 455-56.

Captivity of White Chief

A child captured at the age of four who became an Iroquois chief gave an account of his experiences to missionaries many years later. He did not remember his family name, and the Indians called him White Chief. His case is included here because it illustrates a small child's need of a mother figure during times of crisis. Having lost his own mother, he instinctively turned to a surrogate and this feeling of security she gave him assisted the progress of his assimilation:

The last I remember of my mother, she was running, carrying me in her arms. Suddenly she fell to the ground . . . and I was taken from her. Overwhelmed with fright, I knew nothing more until I opened my eyes to find myself in the lap of an Indian woman. Looking kindly down into my face she smiled on me, and gave me some dried deer's meat and maple sugar. From that hour I believe she loved me as a mother. I am sure I returned to her the affection of a son. . . . I always had a warm place at the fire, and slept in her arms. . . .¹³

After a few years of captivity, the boy became more adept than his companions at racing and other Indian contests. While his prowess pleased the Iroquois warriors, it angered the young Indians he had bested and they taunted him about being white. "I immediately hung my head and ran. . . to my mother, and . . . cried bitterly and

¹³ Harriet S. Caswell, Our Life Among the Iroquois Indians (Boston: Congressional Sunday-School and Publishing Society, 1892), 53.

loudly," he acknowledged. "She soothed me as well as she could, asking what was the matter. After a while I was able to tell her the bitter taunt I had received. She took me in her arms and said, 'Well, my son it is true. You are a white boy. You can't help it; but if you always do right and are smart, you will be none the worse for belonging to that wicked race.'"14

When he matured White Chief took the warpath against enemy tribes, but never against the whites. He became a chief at an early age, married an Indian maiden, and fathered three sons, all of whom eventually became chiefs. His achievements continued to antagonize some of the Indians, and for a time their enmity lead him to consider leaving the tribe to live with the whites. But his Indian relatives prevailed on him to remain, and he told the missionaries that he never regretted his decision to live out his days with the tribe.¹⁵

The cases of Robert Armstrong, White Chief and others indicate that the age of four may have been a breaking point between children who lost, and those who retained, memories of life before captivity. While becoming greatly assimilated, some children captured at age four seem to have called up these early memories in later life and considered returning to white civilization.

14 Ibid., 53. 15 Ibid., 55.

Captivity of Caty Sage

Caty Sage was kidnapped at the age of five in Elk Creek Valley, Virginia, in 1792. She grew up with the Wyandot Indians and became greatly assimilated. Her experiences show how completely a young captive could sever her ties with one civilization and immerse herself in that of another. During more than 60 years with the tribe she survived three Indian husbands, two of whom, the Crain and Between-the-Logs, were important chiefs.

In 1848 her brother, Charles, located her in Kansas after the Wyandots had been removed to that territory. She could neither speak nor understand English, and she declined to return to Virginia to visit her relatives. She told her brother to inform her aged mother that she had always been treated tenderly by her husbands, and she had no reason to complain about her life as an Indian.¹⁶

Captivity of Jacob Nicely

Another captive taken at the age of five was Jacob Nicely. Captured by Seneca Indians in Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania, he vanished without a trace for almost 40 years. Finally, in 1828, his family located him at the Seneca Reservation. Jacob's brother visited him and found

¹⁶ Bonnie Sage Ball, Red Trails and White (New York: Exposition Press, 1955), 19-20, 37-38, 40-41, 51, 58, 61-62.

that he had acquired an Indian wife, a considerable amount of property, and a preference for the Seneca way of life.

Jacob's brother urged him to make a visit to his aged mother in Pennsylvania, and finally he agreed to do so. The brothers rode south on horseback, but they had not gone far when Jacob changed his mind. He was comfortable, content, and secure with the Indians. Why risk crossing over into an alien, perhaps hostile, environment to see a woman whom he could barely remember? He promised to make the trip the following summer, but he never left the Indians again.¹⁷

Captivity of Thomas Lee

Thomas Lee, aged six, was taken during a foray into Union County, Pennsylvania, on August 13, 1782. His father and mother died in the attack on their cabin. The raiders bashed his baby brother against a tree and left him for dead, but neighbors found him still alive and nursed him back to health. Thomas was the youngest at the time of captivity of any of the children discussed in this chapter who became fully restored to white civilization.

Thomas lived with the Indians until ransomed by relatives in 1788. He had become a white Indian, and it was necessary to bind him in the canoe on the way back to

17 Sipe, The Indian Wars of Pennsylvania, 696.

Pennsylvania. When the party reached Wilkes-Barre, they untied him and he immediately leaped from the canoe and fled into the nearby woods. After several hours of searching, they located the boy and guarded him closely during the remainder of the trip. For a long time he remained sullen and yearned to return to the Indians, but gradually he became reaccustomed to white civilization.¹⁸ His restoration shows that even a captive redeemed against his will could re-enter his original milieu if given sufficient time and understanding.

Captivity of Marie Bucheur

Marie Bucheur, the daughter of a French trader who settled on the Frio River in southern Texas (then a province of Mexico) was captured at the age of seven by Comanche Indians. Her story points to the possibility that a conflict of civilizations for a captive's allegiance existed between Indian tribes as well as between Indians and whites.

Bucheur had been on excellent terms with the Comanches, who regularly exchanged their furs for his goods. He had no warning that Mexicans had murdered a band of Comanche hunters on the Rio Grande, resulting in a cry for vengeance against all white people. Thus the French family

18 Ibid., 675-76.

became easy prey. Warriors burned the trader and his wife at the stake while compelling Marie and her ten-year-old brother to watch. Then they separated the children and Marie never saw her brother again.

A Comanche warrior adopted Marie, and she roamed the plains with his family for seven years. Then, the young maiden caught the eye of a visiting Delaware chief, Kistalwa, and he purchased her for two horses and a supply of ammunition and tobacco. The Delawares, agriculturally-inclined Indians who had migrated from the East and settled on rich lands near the Sabine River, were on excellent terms with white settlers. They could offer Marie a much easier life than she led with the hunting-gathering Plains Indians. But Marie, like most captives her age, had become greatly assimilated, and she regarded the Comanches as her own people. She objected strongly to joining the Delawares, even though Kistalwa explained that he wished to rescue her from the people who had murdered her parents. The bargain, however, was final, and Marie tearfully parted from her adopted parents.

Two years later, Marie married Kistalwa. They had two sons who became chiefs, Black Wolf and Light-foot.¹⁹

¹⁹ P. J. DeSmet, Western Missions and Missionaries (Shannon: Irish University Press, 1972), 231-39. Father DeSmet was one of the foremost missionaries in the West.

Captivity of Peter Klengleschmidt

A German family named Klengleschmidt settled on the Pennsylvania frontier during the American Revolution. An Iroquois war party attacked them, killing everyone except Peter, a boy about eight years old. They carried him into captivity and in a short time he became an adopted member of the tribe.

Although Peter became greatly Indianized, his life before captivity provided him with memories enough of a different civilization to pull him part of the way back. At the close of the Revolution, some of the Iroquois settled on the Grand River Reserve. Peter lived with them awhile, then left the reserve and built a cabin near a white settlement on the Nanticoke River. He married two different Indian women, having two children by the first and raising two mulatto orphans with his childless second wife.

Peter worked at times for a white family named Hoover. This family, having once lived in Pennsylvania, knew the story of the missing Klengleschmidt boy. When Peter related what he could remember of his life before captivity, they persuaded him to accompany David Hoover on his next visit to the family home. They found Klengleschmidt relatives still living in the area, and Peter convinced them of his identity by showing them the spot where the Indians had killed his mother.

Peter returned to the Indians, but he lived on the fringes of settlement and had to repress an urge to recross the chasm to white civilization. He often said "in his imperfect English: If my Second Wife Molly was a whiteman I could go and live with my folks."²⁰

Captivity of Silas and Timothy Rice

Silas Rice, aged nine, and his brother, Timothy, aged seven, were captured by Iroquois Indians in 1704. Taken to a village on the St. Lawrence, they were adopted into the families of chiefs as replacements for sons killed in battle. Their story is included here because of the insight it provides into the importance of achievement and attainment of positions of leadership in facilitating Indianization.

As the boys grew into young manhood, they adopted the ways of their captors. They married Indians and exhibited such qualities of leadership that they became the most prominent chiefs among the remnant of the Six Nations at Cauhawaga. Having reached an exalted position in their new way of life, it is not surprising that they had little desire to return to a civilization in which they would be regarded as unfortunate curiosities.

²⁰ Irma Peters to editors of the Standard, 1895 [?] (typescript), American Philosophical Society Library, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

In 1749 a relative of the Rices found Timothy and induced him to visit his original home. He remembered the site and the events of his capture, but he had no desire to abandon his Indian family.

Timothy lived until 1777, and Silas until 1779. They left almost 700 descendants, many of whom became Iroquois leaders.²¹

Captivity of Kiowa Dutch

In 1837 a band of Kiowas raided the Matagorda Bay area of Texas and massacred a German family. They spared an eight-year-old boy and carried him into captivity. He remained with them for 60 years. Like the Rice brothers, he attained renown, but it resulted from his role as a warrior rather than as a peacetime leader of his adopted nation. He grew into a fearsome raider, known throughout the Texas frontier as Kiowa Dutch. An enormous blond, no amount of exposure to the sun could make him resemble his Indian companions, but culturally he became as much a Kiowa as if he had been born into the tribe.

In August 1866, the band of the famous raider, Satanta, attacked an Army wagon train near the Llano River in Central Texas. A severe fight lasted most of the day.

²¹ Edward P. Spillane, "An Iroquois Chief," United States Catholic Historical Society Historical Records and Studies, IV, Part 1 (February, 1911), 103-104.

Finally, the Indians broke off the engagement, but before they left the scene Kiowa Dutch rode close enough to the wagons to curse the soldiers in English, spoken with a German accent.²² He warned them that he would get their scalps before they reached Buffalo Gap.

By 1890 the Kiowas were living peacefully on a reservation in Oklahoma. There an Indian agent interviewed Kiowa Dutch. The captive recalled attending school in Germany for one year and then moving with his family to Texas where they settled on a river near the sea. After the Indians killed his parents, he had never felt any desire to return to white civilization, and he entered with immediate enthusiasm into the wild, free life of the most predatory of all the Plains tribes.²³

Captivity of Jonathan Alder

Jonathan Alder, aged nine, was captured by Shawnee Indians in Wythe County, Virginia, in March 1782. A chief named Succohanos adopted him as a replacement for a dead son. His case is of interest because his assimilation progressed at a slower pace than that of most captives his age. Jonathan's adopted parents treated him kindly, but

22 The age of seven at the time of captivity seems to serve as an approximate breaking point between children who retained the use of native languages during lengthy captivities and those who forgot them.

23 Wharton, Satanta, 14, 59.

for a long time he cried to return to his white family. After he learned their language, he became better satisfied with his new life and would have been content had it not been for repeated attacks of fever and ague.

In time Alder became an adequate hunter. By the age of 13, he had become sufficiently Indianized to go on his first horse stealing raid into Kentucky. But he did not lose his memories of a different way of life before captivity. In 1796 he encountered some white settlers who reported that he retained some knowledge of the English language. The comparatively slow pace of Alder's assimilation assisted him to recross the chasm between civilizations. Among the captives whose experiences were described in sources consulted during this study, he was one of a few taken below the age of ten who voluntarily sought out and returned to his white relatives. After General Anthony Wayne's victory at Fallen Timbers brought peace to the area, Alder and his Indian wife built a cabin near a white settlement. Gradually, association with whites weakened his ties to the Indians, and he decided to seek his white relatives. A neighbor advertised in the newspapers that Alder was attempting to contact his relatives and as a result he located a brother. Alder then separated from his Indian wife, giving her all of his property, and went home to Virginia to live as a white man.²⁴

24 McKnight, Our Western Border, 602-603, 728-31.

Captivity of Cynthia Ann Parker

The case of Cynthia Ann Parker is of unusual interest, not only because of the rapidity and completeness of her assimilation, but also because she became the mother of a great chief. On May 19, 1836, a war party of 800 Comanches, Kiowas and Wichitas struck at Parker's Fort in east central Texas, killing five men and taking four captives, including Cynthia Ann (aged nine). In 1846 an Army officer saw Cynthia Ann and tried unsuccessfully to purchase her. By that time she had become completely Indianized and probably was married.²⁵ Six years later, Captain Randolph B. Marcy saw her while exploring the Red River for the United States Government. He reported as follows:

This woman has adopted all the habits and peculiarities of the Comanches; has an Indian husband (Peta Nocona, a war chief) and children, and cannot be persuaded to leave them. The brother (John Parker) of the woman . . . was sent back by his mother for the purpose of endeavoring to prevail upon his sister to leave the Indians, and return to her family; but he stated to me that on his arrival, she refused to listen to the proposition, saying that her husband, children, and all that she held most dear, were with the Indians, and there she should remain.²⁶

25 Peckham, Captured by Indians, 184-92.

26 Randolph B. Marcy, Exploration of the Red River of Louisiana in the Year 1852, (Washington: A. O. P. Nicholson, 1854), 103.

In 1860 Texas Ranger Captain L. S. Ross recovered Cynthia Ann and her infant daughter during a surprise attack on a Comanche camp. Ross sent word to her uncle, Isaac Parker. After attempting to converse with her, Parker concluded that she could not be Cynthia Ann. But the name had a familiar sound to the long-lost captive. She pointed to herself and repeated "Cynthia Ann." Thus identified, she went with her uncle to become his housekeeper. She left two sons among the Comanches. One of them became the famous war chief known as Quanah Parker.²⁷

Captivity of Samuel Gill

Samuel Gill, son of Sargeant Samuel Gill of Salisbury, Massachusetts, was almost ten years old when captured by Abenaki Indians on June 10, 1697. Taken to Canada, he lived with the Indians the rest of his life. The course of his assimilation was one of contrasts, for he enjoyed his life as an Indian, but he never lost the use of the English language and he chose a white girl for his wife. About 1715 he married a captive named Rosalie (not otherwise identified, since the record was destroyed by Major Robert Rogers in his attack on St. Francis during the French and Indian War.) Samuel and Rosalie had several children. Their sons married Indians and became important

27 Peckham, Captured by Indians, 192-94.

members of the Abenaki tribe. Although Samuel made no attempt to visit his white relatives, he must have instilled a desire to do so in his children for, in 1768, they composed the following memorandum:

We . . . have come together to choose one among us to seek the relatives of our late father, a native of New England. We have never known exactly where he was taken, only that he was brought 80 years ago to St. Francis. His name was Same Gillie. We know also that our grandfather, Sagen Gill, sent twice to seek him, but he, having been taken so young, had become attached to the nation and never wished to leave. . . .²⁸

Captivity of John and Zechariah Tarbell

John and Zechariah Tarbell, like Silas and Timothy Rice, were captured by the Iroquois and lived with them all of their lives. Unlike the Rices, however, they were never chiefs, and their assimilation, while substantial, did not obliterate memories of home. Captured at Groton, New Hampshire, they made the long march to Canada, along with an older sister, Sarah, who was ransomed by the French. John was 11 years old, and Zechariah was seven, at the time of their capture in 1706.

John and Zechariah lived at the Indian towns of Cauhnawaga and St. Regis. They married Indians and were well satisfied with Iroquois life. But a desire to renew

²⁸ Coleman, New England Captives Carried to Canada, II, 360-64.

contacts with white relatives persisted and, in 1739, they visited Groton. Many citizens, including the Governor, attempted to induce them to remain, offering money and land, but they returned to their Indian families.

Thomas Hutchinson, a Colonial official who later became Lieutenant Governor of Massachusetts and one of the foremost historians of his time, recalled that he met John Tarbell at Albany in 1744 when the captive came in with the Indians to trade. He reported that Tarbell was said to be one of the richest men of the tribe. "He made a visit in his Indian dress and with his Indian complexion (for by means of grease and paints but little difference could be discerned) to his relatives at Groton but had no inclination to remain there."²⁹

Captivity of John Longley

One of the first New England captives to become a white Indian was John Longley. Born in 1682 and captured at Groton at the age of 12, he is of interest as a prototype of the adventurous youths who adopted Indian ways quickly and completely. The Indians killed his parents and five brothers and sisters during a raid. They carried John and two younger sisters to Canada. Both sisters died in Canada, one after living many years as a nun. John was redeemed after four years of captivity. But unlike his

29 Ibid., 293-97.

contemporary captive, John Gyles, he did not rejoice at the prospect of exchanging his exciting experiences with the Indians for the staid, hard Puritan life style. He was ransomed against his will, and his deliverers had to bind him hand and foot on the trip home to keep him from running away and returning to the Indians.³⁰

Captivity of Warren Lyons

Warren Lyons was captured in 1837 by Comanches in Lavaca County, Texas. Thirteen years old when taken, he remained with the Indians ten years. He had several opportunities to escape, but knowing that the Indians had killed his father and suspecting that his mother had left the area, he believed that he no longer had a home except with his captors. In 1847 he went with some Comanches to San Antonio to trade. There friends of the family recognized him, told him that his mother still lived in Lavaca County, and urged him to return home. Warren, who still retained the use of English, protested that he had two young Indian wives and did not wish to leave them. He received a large number of presents as an inducement to visit his mother, but he remained obdurate until given two beautiful blankets, one for each wife. Then he promised only to make a brief visit before returning to his Indian

30 Ibid., I, 284-85.

wives and friends. His white relatives were equally determined to redeem him, however, and finally a brother who belonged to the Texas Rangers persuaded him to join that organization.³¹

At the time of his capture, Warren was at an age to be caught up in a contest of civilizations. Memories of his early life tugged strongly against the satisfactions of his new surroundings. Teetering on the margin between civilizations, he could have been propelled by a chance occurrence to leap in either direction. A solution was found by offering him a life of adventure as a Texas Ranger, the best of both worlds for a youth with his background.

Captivity of the Girty Brothers

The importance of age at the time of capture in determining the course and degree of assimilation is clearly demonstrated when studying the cases of siblings. One of the most interesting captivities of this kind was that of Simon Girty, the infamous "white savage," who terrorized Kentucky from 1778 to 1794. Girty was taken along with his mother, stepfather, three brothers, and a stepbrother at the fall of Fort Granville, Pennsylvania, in 1756.

³¹ James T. DeShields, The Border Wars of Texas (Tioga, Texas: The Herald Company, 1912), 229-31.

The Indians tortured John Turner, the stepfather, to death while forcing the family to watch. The Delawares held Mrs. Turner and her small son, John, until 1759. They took the four Girty boys - Thomas, Simon, James, and George, to Kittanning. Only a few weeks after their arrival there, an army led by Colonel John Armstrong attacked the town and rescued Thomas, the eldest brother. The Indians escaped into the wilderness, forcing the other captives to flee with them. Simon, aged 15, was held by the Senecas; James, aged 13, by the Shawnees; and George, aged 11, by the Delawares. Each of them remained with the Indians three years, being released in 1759.³²

During the American Revolution, the three younger Girty brothers joined the British Indian service and participated in many raids against the Kentucky settlements. Simon became so notorious for acts of cruelty and treachery that his very name struck terror throughout the frontier. It was commonly believed that he had become a complete Indian, more dangerous than the warriors he led. But Consul W. Butterfield, biographer of the Girtys, contends that Simon was not thoroughly Indianized: "Girty was at times . . . ferociously cruel, and exhibited the utmost savagery, but he was not at heart an Indian; nor

³² Consul Willshire Butterfield, History of the Girtys (Columbus: Long's College Book Co., 1950), 8-16.

did he leave Pittsburgh to throw in his lot with 'the dusky companions of his forest life,' but with 'their allies,' the British."³³ In 1784 Simon married Catherine Malott, a captive held by the Delawares since 1780. He secured her release from captivity, and they built a cabin in Canada near Detroit. Although Simon spent much of his time with Indians, he and his wife lived as whites.

James Girty married a Shawnee and became more Indianized than his older brother. Although less notorious than Simon, he also has been characterized by frontier settlers as a complete savage. But Butterfield contends otherwise: "He had a cruel and savage nature, it is true, but he had by no means given himself up to the . . . life of an Indian, living upon scanty food like the red men, hunting as they did, dressing like them, or depending upon gifts from the British, or obtaining the necessities of life by selling skins to the traders. He was himself a trader, and a thrifty one. . . ."34

The youngest Girty brother, George, like Simon and James, participated in many raids against the settlements. But, unlike his brothers, he eventually returned completely to the Indian life style, married a Delaware, and fathered

33 Ibid., 56. 34 Ibid., 231-32.

several children. He is said to have attempted whenever possible to influence white captives to accept the Indian way of life.³⁵

Captivity of Joanna Ordway

Joanna Ordway, aged about 18, was captured in Massachusetts in 1704. Although conclusive evidence is lacking, one can surmise that she became substantially assimilated. For several years she roamed the woods with the Abenakis. In the spring of 1707, a party of Deerfield scouts encountered a band of raiders near Lake Champlain and wounded one of them. A scout rushed forward to obtain a scalp, then stared in amazement when the intended victim, a white woman, scrambled away into the wilderness. From his description, she was thought to be Joanna Ordway.

On June 22, 1710, a French priest baptized Joanna's Indian baby girl, "born six months ago in the woods, that an English girl, named Jeanne Owardway, taken at Haverhill in New England in the winter of 1704 by the Abenakis of the river of Bequancour, has had by an Abenaki savage."³⁶

35 Ibid., 292-93, 315.

36 Coleman, New England Captives Carried to Canada, I, 351.

Joanna named the baby Marguerite Abenaki. Later the Indians sold the captive to the French, for she was living in Montreal in 1713.³⁷

Captivity of James Smith

James Smith was 18 years old when captured by Oka and Delaware Indians while on a road-cutting expedition near Fort Loudoun, Pennsylvania, in May 1755. His narrative is one of the most valuable of any eighteenth century captive in portraying the manners and customs of an eastern woodland tribe. The Indians took him to Fort Duquesne and forced him to run the gauntlet, but spared his life while burning several other captives. Expecting a fiery death, he was, instead, adopted by a Caughnawaga Indian family. After his redemption, he wrote a valuable account of his experiences:

At length one of the chiefs made a speech. . . .
 "My son, you are now flesh of our flesh, and bone of our bone. By the ceremony which was performed this day, every drop of white blood was washed from your veins; you are taken into the Caughnewago nation, and initiated into a warlike tribe; you are adopted into a great family. . . .
 My son, you have nothing to fear, we are now under the same obligations to love, support, and defend one another, therefore you are to consider yourself one of our people." --- At this time I did not believe this fine speech, especially that of the white blood being washed out of me; but since that time . . . I never knew them to make

37 Ibid., 352.

any distinction between me and themselves in any respect whatever until I left them. --- If they had plenty of clothing, I had plenty, if we were scarce, we all shared the same fate.³⁸

Although Smith was past the age of most captives who became greatly assimilated, he adopted many Indian culture traits, going on hunting trips with the Indians almost from the day of his adoption and quickly learning their language. His band raided the settlements several times, but did not take him along. "Though they had been exceedingly kind to me, I still detested them, on account of the barbarity I beheld after Braddock's defeat. . . . but I began now to excuse the Indians on account of their want of information," he wrote.³⁹

During the severe winter of 1757-58, Smith lived with an elderly and crippled adopted Indian brother and a little boy. At the point of starvation, he determined to escape to the nearest settlement. After traveling about 12 miles, he saw buffalo tracks and followed them until he made a kill. Then, surprisingly, he realized that he had acquired an affection for his Indian brothers. "When hunger was abated, I began to be tenderly concerned for my old Indian brother, and the little boy I had left in a

38 James Smith, "An Account of the Remarkable Occurrences in the Life and Travels of Colonel James Smith," in Drimmer, Scalps and Tomahawks, 32-33.

39 Ibid., 41.

perishing condition," he recalled. "I made haste and packed up what meat I could carry . . . and returned homewards."⁴⁰

Home, in this case, meant his Indian family. Smith remained with them for another year and a half. Then, he accompanied some Indians to Montreal where he managed to get aboard a French ship carrying English prisoners to be exchanged. He reached home in 1760.⁴¹

Conclusion

The foregoing narratives indicate that the critical age for Indianization was about 12 years. Most children taken below that age were easily assimilated. Those older than 12 accepted many Indian ways, but, in most cases they retained the desire to return to their white families.⁴² Pinpointing the critical age which separated captives who became Indianized from others who resisted assimilation is difficult because of the imprecision of the available evidence. Many of the captives did not remember their own

40 Ibid., 57. 41 Ibid., 60.

42 In order to test this thesis, an analysis was made of the assimilation of approximately fifty captives, aged eighteen and under. Factors considered in determining the extent of assimilation include knowledge of Indian languages, acquiring skill in Indian activities, attempts to escape, attachment to individual Indians, participation in warfare against other tribes, raids against whites, Indian marriages, and acceptance or rejection of opportunities to return to white families.

names and it is highly unlikely that they could recall their ages at the time they were captured. In many cases, however, the exact date of the capture was known to relatives who recorded it or told it to the captives when they were redeemed. In other instances, painstaking research by such scholars as Emma Lewis Coleman verified ages of captives through court or church records.⁴³

In addition to the case studies above, approximately 50 more cases were analyzed of children who were captured at 18 years or under. These cases confirm the high correlation between age at time of captivity and the extent of assimilation. They suggest also that the "critical" age at time of abduction was somewhat lower for girls than boys.

Few captives deviated significantly from the pattern. Joanna Ordway was 18 when captured by Abenakis. She roamed the woods with her captor and had a child by him. If the Deerfield scouts had correctly identified her, she could have been redeemed if she had not run away. Apparently she never saw her white family again, but evidence exists that she left the Indians to live in Montreal. If more were known of the pressures placed on

43 There is a further complicating factor when considering the assimilation of children taken to Canada. Most of these young captives were sold to the French and became transformed into French-Canadian Catholics rather than Indians. For purposes of this study, only those New England children who remained several years in Indian hands are included.

her to submit to a sexual relationship, perhaps it would be learned that she had attempted to resist assimilation to the same extent as other girls her age.

Of the cases examined, the captive who deviated most from the pattern was Leonard Schoolcraft. Taken at 16, he showed the qualities the Indians sought in a potential warrior when, instead of dodging his assailants while running the gauntlet, he attacked them with his fists. The reliable antiquarian, Alexander Scott Withers, reports that he was never positively identified again, but frontiersmen accused him of becoming a complete savage and a threat to his own people. Nine years after his capture, a war party struck the settlement of Hacker's Creek. Withers includes an account of the raid in his Chronicles of Border Warfare which describes the deeds of a white man believed to have been Schoolcraft. The raiders murdered everyone at the home of Edmund West except an 11-year-old girl. They tomahawked and scalped her and, believing her to be dead, they threw her body over a fence, gathered up their plunder, and prepared to depart. But Schoolcraft detected signs of life in the child and directed one of the warriors to stab her with a knife. With unbelievable courage, the girl continued to feign death during these

torments, and she lived to describe her ordeal at the hands of the savage white man and his Indian companions to outraged neighbors who nursed her back to health.⁴⁴

Was Schoolcraft by nature more savagely inclined than other captives taken at his age? Or was the renegade really some other captive who had been with the Indians since early childhood? Probably the answer will never be known.

Fortunately, there is additional information about the attitudes of a captive who appears to have been less completely assimilated than others taken at his age. He was John Slover, captured at the age of eight by the Miamis and held for 12 years. In 1773 some Shawnees brought him to Pittsburgh. There some relatives recognized him and urged him to return home. He yielded reluctantly, having become strongly attached to the Indians and their way of life.

During the American Revolution, an army under the command of Colonel William Crawford invaded the Indian country and pressed Slover into service as a guide. He accepted the assignment reluctantly. The Shawnees and Delawares defeated Crawford's forces, and Slover found himself a prisoner once more. The Indians upbraided him for turning against his brother and, urged on by James Girty, they threatened to burn him at the stake.

44 Withers, Chronicles of Border Warfare, 377-80.

Slover knew many of the chiefs, spoke their language fluently, and defended himself ably in the council called to decide his fate. He reminded them that during the whole 12 years of his former captivity he had given ample proof of his fidelity to the Indians. Although he had had a hundred opportunities, he had never once attempted to escape. Several warriors present at the council could testify that at the Treaty of Fort Pitt he had left them reluctantly, in compliance with the urging of his family. He had then taken leave of them publicly, in time of peace, and with their approval. He had had no idea that he would ever be called upon to oppose them in a future war, but when war broke out duty compelled him to accompany his countrymen to the field against the Indians, as he would have fought for the Indians against the whites if he had remained with them. In conclusion, he stated that "it was the undoubted duty of every warrior to serve his country, without regard to his own private feelings of attachment; that he had done so; and if the Indians thought it worthy of death, they could inflict the penalty upon him!"⁴⁵

Slover's spirited defense failed to sway the Indians. They fastened him to a stake and made ready to burn him. But suddenly a downpour of rain extinguished the fire, postponing his execution until the next day.

⁴⁵ John A. M'Clung, Sketches of Western Adventure (Cincinnati: H. S. & J. Applegate & Co., 1851), 141-42.

During the night his guards fell asleep, and he loosened his bonds and escaped into the darkness. Several days later he reached safety at Wheeling.⁴⁶

These cases notwithstanding, the crucial importance of age at time of capture to assimilation is clear. The evidence does not support James Axtell's conclusion that the critical age separating those who were assimilated from those who were not was 15 or 16. Instead, the evidence indicates that, other factors being equal, children captured below the age of 12 usually became greatly Indianized. With few exceptions, teen-aged female captives, although they accepted many features of Indian life, retained the desire to return to their white families. However, male captives taken during their early teens were attracted to many aspects of Indian life, and the critical age for them was approximately 14. For both boys and girls the critical age coincided with the age of puberty.

46 Ibid., 143-47.

CHAPTER VII

AFTER RESTORATION

The number of captives living out their lives with Indians probably was considerably smaller than the number restored to their white families. For many redeemed captives, restoration to white civilization had remained the most cherished of desires, and rapid readjustment resulted. But there is evidence that hundreds of former captives found reacculturation a slow and painful process. Some of them died without ever losing the desire to return to the Indians. For others the transformation required a long period of time and great patience on the part of their relatives. In some cases the former captives eased the adjustment by obtaining employment, such as interpreting or trading, which allowed them to work with Indians. In other instances, male ex-captives were enticed into giving up the wild, free life of the Indians by diverting them into scouting or other dangerous careers in the wilderness or on the plains. Some of them became mountain men and adopted a life style featuring traits of both civilizations. It is the purpose of this chapter to present case studies which illustrate variations in patterns of reassimilation.

Captivity of Margaret Paulee

Margaret Paulee was captured by Shawnee Indians in Monroe County, Virginia, on September 23, 1779. Her husband, John Paulee, was killed in the attack and the raiders murdered her infant daughter by bashing her head against a tree. Margaret remained in captivity until 1784. Her case is included here because it illustrated the comparative case of readjustment to white civilization experienced by adult redeemed female captives who did not marry Indians.

Margaret was adopted by the Shawnee chief, Wa-ba-kah-kah-to, and very nearly murdered by him when his son died in a battle against the Kentuckians. Six months after her capture she gave birth to a boy. The Indians were delighted and prized the child highly. Margaret's greatest concern was that her captors would compel her to marry against her will. A female captive who had married an Indian urged her to do likewise, insisting that she would be killed if she refused. She received reassurance, however, from the renegade, Simon Girty, who denied that the Shawnees forced women to marry if they chose not to do so.

For several years a trader attempted to ransom Mrs. Paulee, but the chief refused to part with his adopted daughter. Margaret, knowing that she would never be free as long as he lived, prayed for his death. "My prayer,"

she recalled, "however sinful it may seem, was followed by his death." She and her son were ransomed soon afterwards.

Except for the fact that she found it impossible to sleep in a bed for a time, Margaret quickly reacquired all of the cultural traits of her white relatives. She married a man named Erskine within a year after her redemption and they had five children. She lived to the age of 91 and enjoyed telling stories of her captivity to her numerous grandchildren.¹

Captivity and Restoration of Mercy Short

In the French and Indian raid led by François Hertel against Salmon Falls in 1690, Mercy Short witnessed the murder of her parents, brothers, and sisters. The 15-year-old survivor made the march to Canada, where she experienced a year of Indian captivity. After her redemption the Massachusetts authorities placed her with a Boston family. Her experiences provide the most dramatic evidence available of the torments endured by some redeemed Puritan captives. They led directly to involvement in the witchcraft hysteria.

In 1692 Mercy began having hallucinations of captivity among demons. Cotton Mather attempted for weeks to free her from possession. After a time her tormenters

¹ John H. Moore, "A Captive of the Shawnees, 1779-1784," West Virginia History, XXIII (1962), 287-96.

began to assume the form of Indians, and she gave such vivid descriptions of war dances that people in the room slashed the air around her bed with swords in an attempt to destroy the invisible savages.

At last Mather's exorcism freed the girl of possession, but she soon entered into a far more destructive hysteria. The witchcraft delusion spread in Massachusetts and she joined a number of other girls in condemning innocent citizens. Richard Slotkin advances the interesting theory that she was undergoing "a psychotic form of the neurosis" which all Puritan returned captives shared to greater or lesser degree. Their captivity experiences so damaged the psyche that a deliverance from the devil was necessary. In a majority of cases the deliverance was partial at best. Many had accepted Indian traits and superstitions sufficiently to scandalize the Puritans. Others were so emotionally scarred by memories of their ordeal that their hold on reality remained tenuous and they gave way to paroxysms of guilt over having succumbed to the temptations of the Indian life style. Feelings of guilt frequently were tinged with resentment against neighbors for a supposed lack of sympathy for their plight.

In the case of Mercy Short, the exorcisms of Cotton Mather failed to free her from feelings of guilt for having survived the massacre of her family. She imagined that her neighbors suspected her of having indulged in sexual

activities with Indians and she felt that they persecuted her for refusing to conform completely to the Puritan code of behavior.

Slotkin asserts that many former captives developed a "pathological urge to public confession." While seeking the status of martyr a redeemed captive at the same time wished to condemn New England society for its smug ignorance of the nightmare of captivity. These feelings of alienation led Mercy Short to level accusations of witchcraft against respectable citizens who had befriended her or, at least, had done her no wrong.²

Captivity of Elizabeth Studebaker

Elizabeth Studebaker, a small child, was captured in Cumberland County, Pennsylvania, in 1755. During nine years of captivity she developed into a beautiful maiden and a great favorite of her captors. Her case is included here because she typifies redeemed captives who totally rejected white civilization. In November 1764, Colonel Henry Bouquet invaded the Indian country and compelled the Delawares and Shawnees to surrender 206 white prisoners. Many of them, Elizabeth Studebaker included, resisted restoration. A soldier named William Smith described the scene:

2 Slotkin, Regeneration Through Violence, 116-45.

Among the children who had been carried off young, and had long lived with the Indians, it is not to be expected that any marks of joy would appear on being restored to their parents or relatives. Having been accustomed to look upon the Indians as the only connexions they had, having been tenderly treated by them. . . it is no wonder that they considered their new state in the light of a captivity, and parted from the savages with tears. But it must not be denied that there were even some grown persons who shewed an unwillingness to return. The Shawanese were obliged to bind several of their prisoners and force them along to the camp; and some women, who had been delivered up, afterwards found means to escape and run back to the Indian towns.³

On the road to Fort Pitt it was necessary to watch many former captives closely to prevent their running away to rejoin the Indians. One of the most determined to escape from what she considered a "captivity" was Elizabeth Studebaker. Ten days after the march began she slipped away into the wilderness to rejoin her adopted people, the Delawares.⁴

3 Smith, An Historical Account of the Expedition Against the Ohio Indians, in 1764, 26-29.

4 Sipe, Indian Wars of Pennsylvania, 482, 843. David Boyd's sister, Rhoda, accompanied Elizabeth in her flight back to the Indian village. Two other young Pennsylvania girls redeemed against their will were Elizabeth Hawkins and a Miss Benjamin (sister of William Benjamin). Both had married Indians and were miserable because of the separation. In both cases their white families permitted them to return to the Indians after it became evident that they would never be content with their white relatives. Ibid., 521, 633-34.

Captivity and Restoration of John McLennan

In the spring of 1836, a seven-year-old Texas boy named John McLennan was captured by Kichai Indians.⁵ His parents were killed and two younger brothers died in captivity. John lived with the Indians ten years until government agents signed a treaty with the tribe. Then Texas Rangers went to the Kichai village to obtain the prisoner. Upon their arrival they found the chief still reluctant to surrender him. One of the Rangers asked if this reluctance resulted from John's skill as a warrior. The chief replied that John did not measure up as a warrior, but his skill as a horse thief would be sorely missed.

John's poignant story is of interest because it illustrates how traumatic an experience it was for young captives to re-enter a world which was as foreign to them as if they had never belonged to it.

He refused to go with the Rangers voluntarily. When they tied him up, some of the young warriors strung their bows. The chief averted a battle by restraining his men and telling John that if he did not like life with the whites, he would be welcome to return to the tribe.

W. J. Stokes, one of the Rangers, relates that "the night we started with him, it snowed. We put a hickory

5 A Caddoan tribe with a language similar to that of the Pawnees.

shirt on him, but after a little he complained that it scratched his arms. We gave him pants, but he cut off the waist and wore them as leggins. By the time we were half-way home, he looked as much like an Indian as he had when we started."

The Rangers turned John over to his uncle, Neil McLennan. The first night at home, the youth refused to go inside the house. He stood under the stars all night long with both hands gripping his pony's mane. "In-different to the cold and the wind," he "refused to enter that frightening other world to which they said he now belonged."

John finally adjusted to white civilization, married, and became a successful farmer, but he never was quite sure that he had stopped being a white Indian. He joined the Rangers for awhile, then returned to the Indians briefly. On several occasions he brought large stores of gifts to his adopted mother. When the Kichais hunted in the vicinity of his farm, he went with them. His wife always wondered whether he would return.

When John stayed overnight in Waco, he slept on the floor of the second story of the courthouse. One night in 1866 he fell through a floor-length window and broke his neck when he hit the ground.⁶

⁶ R. Henderson Shuffler, "Christmas in the Cross Timbers," Texas Parade, XXV (1964), 10-13.

Restoration of Cynthia Ann Parker

Cynthia Ann Parker, whose captivity by Comanches was discussed in the preceding chapter, was redeemed by Captain Sul Ross on December 18, 1860. With her was an 18-month-old daughter, Topsannah (Prairie Flower). Mildred P. Mayhall, Texas ethnohistorian, characterizes Cynthia Ann as one of the many captives who "entered the life of the tribe with zest" and "grew to love the free life, even preferred it to the hum-drum existence of civilized communities." Her experiences demonstrate what a tragic disservice was done to captives in this category when they were compelled to return to white society.

Thirty-four years old at the time of her redemption, Cynthia Ann went to live at the home of an uncle. Gradually she regained the use of English and became a successful housekeeper, but she remained bitter and miserable. Several times she tried to escape, only to have relatives catch up with her. Anxious about the fate of her half-Indian sons, she scarified her chest, put the blood on tobacco and burned it, wailing to the spirits to preserve the lives of her children. Civilization seemed not to agree

with little Topsannah who soon sickened and died. After this loss, Cynthia Ann became so broken in spirit that she literally starved herself to death.⁷

Restoration of Lizzie Ross

Captain Sul Ross, the Ranger who reclaimed Cynthia Ann Parker, was the central figure in redeeming another female captive, this time with quite different results. In September 1858, during a battle near the present Rush Springs, Oklahoma, he saw a white girl among the Comanches and seized her as she fled. This case provides a remarkable example of ease of reassimilation where one would expect great difficulty.

The girl, about eight years old, at first considered herself a "captive" of the whites. She did not recall any life but that of the Indians, and her identity was never discovered. Ross adopted her, naming her Lizzie after his fiancée. He saw to it that she obtained a good education and she lived with his family while he attained high political office, including the governorship of Texas.⁸ His mother reared and educated her as one of her own daughters. She became a beautiful and accomplished

7 Mildred P. Mayhall, The Indian Wars of Texas (Waco: Texian Press, 1965), 108-16; Dallas Times Herald, June 19, 1875. After her death, one of her sons visited the settlements in search of his mother.

8 Corwin, Comanche and Kiowa Captives, 117-21.

woman. On a visit to California she met and married a wealthy merchant, living a life of culture and refinement, apparently with no regrets over removal from Indian civilization.⁹

Captivity and Restoration of Dan M'Allum

Dan M'Allum was captured at the age of two by Mohawk Indians soon after the beginning of the American Revolution. His case indicates that love of adopted parents acted as a strong deterrent to reassimilation. When the war ended, the Indians surrendered their captives, but Dan tried desperately to rejoin his beloved Mohawk mother. George Peck, a neighbor of the boy's parents, described Dan's difficulties in readjusting to white civilization: "And now another trial awaited the poor boy. The usages of civilization were like the chains of slavery to him. To wear pants and jacket, and sleep upon a bed, and to eat bread . . . all this was so strange - everything so unnatural. . . ."

Peck, who knew Dan M'Allum for many years, reported that the redeemed captive retained many Indian culture traits. Especially during his frequent drinking sprees his war whoop resounded through the settlement. Dan frequently

9 Elizabeth R. Clarks, Ya-A-H-H-OO, Warwhoop of the Comanches (typescript), University of Texas Archives, Austin, 59-60.

complained that he regretted leaving the Iroquois, lamenting that he "was a good Indian," but he would "never make a white man." He was antagonistic toward his real mother, contrasting her critical attitude toward his behavior with the loving kindness of his Indian mother.

Many years after his redemption Dan married and became more settled in his habits. When his neighbors stopped taunting him with such names as "drunken Indian" and "shiftless savage," he gradually evolved into a successful farmer and reputable citizen.¹⁰

Restoration of Herman Lehmann

Herman Lehmann, restored against his will after years of life as a Comanche warrior, has described the difficulties of abandoning the attractions of Indian civilization. His narrative reveals how crucial the patience and understanding of relatives could be in re-assimilating a redeemed captive. When soldiers brought him home under guard, virtually the entire Loyal Valley community joined in a welcoming celebration. Their good intentions adversely affected the youth, however, for the emotional demonstration repulsed him and made him determined to escape as soon as possible to rejoin the Comanches. His family and their friends prepared a feast to celebrate his

10 Peck, The History of Wyoming, 235-37.

return, but he kicked over the table and tried to scramble out the door. "Everyone did all that could be done for me," he admitted, "but I did not like any of them. That night I would not sleep in the house, although they prepared a nice feather bed for me and arranged everything for my comfort. I made a pallet of my own blankets out on the ground. . . ."

Herman's brother, Willie, stayed near him constantly to prevent his running away and to try to keep him from getting into trouble. The redeemed captive killed many hogs with his bow and arrows and would have killed the neighbors' calves had Willie not prevented him. Neither was he permitted to steal horses, so his only real pleasure consisted of drawing his bow on neighborhood children to make them run.

Herman's family was determined to reclaim him. Patiently they put up with his tantrums and misdeeds and brought him back when he tried to run away. They tried to please him in every possible way and slowly he began to respond: "At last the kindness, tenderness, and gentleness of my good Christian mother, the affectionate love of my sisters, and the vigilance of my brothers gradually wove a net of love around me that is as lasting as time itself."¹¹

¹¹ Lehmann, Nine Years With the Indians, 205-207; Greene, The Last Captive, 160. Greene believes that Lehmann remained a voluntary captive of the Indian way of life for the rest of his days.

Restoration of John Tanner

Difficulties in readjusting to white ways were not solely the result of the captive's experiences. White distrust and hatred of Indians also played a part in making readjustment almost impossible for captives who had lived for many years with the Indians. The experiences of John Tanner provide a classic example, for he spent more than 20 years trying to gain acceptance in white society.

Tanner had been captured at the age of nine and lived 30 years among the Ojibways. He had married an Indian woman and fathered several children. Although he had lost the use of his native language and forgotten his name, he, like several other captives, developed a desire in later life to return to white civilization. Noel M. Loomis, in a valuable introduction to Tanner's narrative, noted that he, like many other redeemed captives, could not bridge the gap, even though he turned his back on his adopted people, built a cabin in a white settlement, and sent his half-Indian children to white schools. His white neighbors distrusted him because he could not conceal his Indian characteristics. He was poorly prepared to support a family in a competitive society. "Confused and bewildered, his white heritage constantly fighting" against his Indian experiences, "in his later years he was lonely and 'bitter'."

Finally he decided that his only chance of gaining acceptance was to marry a white woman. But this attempt, too, proved to be a failure. After a short time his wife abandoned him and, giving up the struggle, he disappeared into the wilderness.¹²

Captivity and Restoration of Isaac Bradley

By no means all restored captives who had been taken in youth retained an affection for their former captors. Some became inveterate Indian haters. Probably not one of them exceeded Isaac Bradley in revenging himself upon the race which had held him in bondage.

Bradley was captured in 1695 by the Abenaki Indians of Pigwacket. He was 16 years old at the time. For two years he lived the life of an Indian. Then one night he escaped, taking another youth with him. They fled down the Seco River and when his companion became exhausted Bradley carried him on his back to safety.

Thirteen members of Bradley's family had been killed by Indians. For this he exacted a terrible toll. He led a band of scalp hunters on repeated raids against the Abenakis, killing or capturing 15 Indians, one for

¹² John Tanner, A Narrative of the Captivity and Adventures of John Tanner (Minneapolis: Ross & Haines, 1956), ix-xiii.

each lost relative and for the two years he spent in captivity.¹³

Captivity and Restoration of William Wells

William Wells was captured at the age of 12 in February 1775. A member of a prominent frontier family, he was the brother of Colonel Samuel Wells of Louisville, Kentucky. He became a fearsome warrior against the whites and, after restoration, a famous scout against the Indians. His experiences show that strong character and natural ability could lead to success in both societies.

Wells grew up with the Miami tribe, became substantially Indianized,¹⁴ and married a sister of the great

¹³ George Hill Evans, Pigwacket, Part I: Old Indian Days in the Valley of the Seco (Conway, N. H.: Historical Society, 1939), 47-51.

¹⁴ The missionary, John Heckewelder, describes the following incident, typical of Indian psychology, which illustrates the extent of Wells' assimilation: "William Wells . . . had so wounded a large bear that he could not move from the spot, and the animal cried piteously. . . . The young man went up to him, and with seeming great earnestness, addressed him in the Wabash language, now and then giving him a slight stroke on the nose with his ramrod. I asked him, when he had done, what he had been saying to the bear? 'I have', said he, 'upbraided him for acting the part of a coward; I told him that he knew the fortune of war, that one or the other of us must have fallen; that it was his fate to be conquered, and he ought to die like a man, like a hero, and not like an old woman; that if the case had been reversed, and I had fallen into the power of my enemy, I would not have disgraced my nation as he had, but would have died with firmness and courage, as becomes a true warrior.'" John Heckewelder, History, Manner, and Customs of the Indian Nations Who Once Inhabited Pennsylvania and the Neighboring States. (New York: Arno Press, 1971), 256.

war chief, Little Turtle. He fought bravely beside Little Turtle in the Indian victories over Generals Harmar and St. Clair, killing several American soldiers. But by the time General Anthony Wayne invaded the Indian country in 1794 he became burdened by the thought that he had killed some of his own kinsmen and decided to abandon his Indian family and return to white civilization.¹⁵

According to the reliable antiquarian, Charles McKnight, Wells parted from the Indians in the following manner:

Taking with him the great war chief, Little Turtle, to a secluded spot on the Maumee, Wells said to him: "I now leave your nation for my own people; we have long been friends. We are friends yet until the sun reaches that height, (which he indicated). From that time we are enemies. Then if you wish to kill me, you may. If I want to kill you, I may." At the appointed hour, crossing the river, Wells plunged into the forest and struck the trail of Wayne's Army.

Wells proved to be an invaluable asset to General Wayne. He knew the country and understood Indian warfare as did few men of his time. Commissioned captain, he served as the leader of a corps of rangers, many of whom were former captives. Wells and his men killed or captured more than 40 warriors, frequently bringing in prisoners and compelling them to divulge the plans of the Indians.¹⁶

¹⁵ Theodore Roosevelt, The Winning of the West, III, pt. 2 (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1894), 205.

¹⁶ McKnight, Our Western Border, 554-61.

On the eve of the Battle of Fallen Timbers, General Wayne sent Wells and three other former captives to capture an Indian. They succeeded in seizing two prisoners, bound them, and then made a night attack on a Miami village within two miles of a British fort. They walked right among a group of Indians, each fired at a warrior, and fled into the darkness. One ranger was captured; Wells and the others were wounded but made good their escape. They picked up their prisoners and delivered them to General Wayne.¹⁷

After Wayne's victory at Fallen Timbers, Wells retained the esteem of Indians as well as whites. At the Treaty of Greenville, Little Turtle requested that Wells be appointed agent and interpreter at Fort Wayne. Wells served in that capacity during the remainder of his life.¹⁸ His first wife having died, he married another sister of Little Turtle. They lived in the fashion of whites and he had his children educated in white schools.¹⁹

In 1796 Constantin-Francois Chasseboeuf, Comte de Volney, a prominent French traveler and scientist, met

¹⁷ Roosevelt, Winning of the West, III, pt. 2, 208-209.

¹⁸ Milo M. Quaife, Chicago and the Old Northwest (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1913), 224-25.

¹⁹ McKnight, Our Western Border, 561.

Wells and Little Turtle in Philadelphia and obtained their assistance in compiling a vocabulary of the Miami language. He asked Wells why he had decided to abandon Indian life. Wells responded that, although he had been adopted and well treated, he had never forgotten the pleasures and satisfactions of the first 12 years of his life.²⁰

Wells' service as Indian agent proved to be of great value in learning of impending hostilities. In 1806 he gave timely warning of a plot by Chippewas, Ottawas, and Potawatomies to attack Detroit, Mackinac, Fort Wayne and Chicago.²¹ Six years later he provided details of a plan by the Potawatomi chief, Main Poc, to strike the frontier settlements as soon as war broke out between Britain and the United States.²² Learning that the Potawatomis planned to attack Fort Dearborn, he led a band of Miami scouts into Chicago on August 14, 1812. On the following morning the troops and white residents evacuated the fort. Wells led the march, attempting to guard against an ambush. When the Potawatamis attacked, Wells tried to save the women and children. Shot through the breast and pinned under his dead horse, he killed two warriors with a pistol and a

20 C. F. C. Volney, compte de, A View of the Soil and Climate of the United States of America (New York: Hafner Pub. Co., 1968), 371.

21 Quaife, Chicago and the Old Northwest, 224-25.

22 William Wells, extract of report, February 10, 1812, American State Papers, Indian Affairs, I, (Washington: Gales & Seaton, 1832), 805.

third with a dirk before being tomahawked. In recognition of his bravery, the Indians cut out his heart and ate it. In the ensuing Fort Dearborn massacre more than 50 men, women and children died. Among the survivors was Wells' niece, the wife of the commanding officer.²³

Conclusions

In considering the foregoing cases and others, no clear cut pattern emerges. It is plain that reacceptance of white civilization was difficult for many and impossible for some redeemed captives. But others resumed the white way of life with comparatively little difficulty. These apparent variations may result in part from the paucity of information about the captive's experiences after redemption. Important decisions sometimes turn on seemingly trivial events which are unrecorded and, therefore, remain unknown to the researcher. Generalizations about factors affecting reacculturation must be tentative, at best, when narratives report little about the individual's lives after restoration.

While it was possible, to this researcher's satisfaction, to establish age as the determining factor in Indianization, no conclusive evidence was found that age at time of capture determined ease or difficulty of

²³ Quaife, Chicago and the Old Northwest, 211, 402-405, 409-11.

readjustment to white civilization. Whites taken as adults experienced little difficulty in readjusting, for few of them had become greatly Indianized. But among captives taken in preadolescence who had become substantially assimilated, it seems to have mattered little whether they had been captured as infants or as older children. Lizzie Ross, taken too young to remember any aspect of white civilization, seems to have experienced little difficulty in adjusting to it. Cynthia Ann Parker, captured at the age of nine, found reassimilation impossible. John Tanner, nine years old at the time of capture, tried desperately to live as a white man but failed in the end, while John Hunter, captured in infancy, accomplished the transition.

Nor has it been possible to establish either length of time held by the Indians or age at the time of restoration to white society as the overriding factor in facilitating reacceptance of white culture patterns. In most instances a lengthy captivity resulted in a more difficult readjustment, but this was not always the case. For Elizabeth Studebaker a nine-year captivity created too great a gulf to bridge, while William Wells left the tribe of his own volition after 20 years of Indian life.

Finally, one wonders about the attitude of whites toward the restored captive as a factor in easing or retarding readjustment. Obviously in the cases of John Tanner and Dan M'Allum the whites' prejudice toward and

distrust of the redeemed men made their lives difficult. But in many cases, probably a majority, the redeemed captive was received joyfully and apparently treated with the greatest kindness and consideration. The experiences of Herman Lehmann and Lizzie Ross illustrate the determination of relatives and redeemers to restore the former captives to the white way of life. In these instances they were successful, but no amount of kindness and patience sufficed to induce Elizabeth Hawkins or the sister of William Benjamin to abandon their Indian characteristics. Indians they were in every aspect except birth, and Indians they insisted upon remaining for the rest of their lives. Given a clear choice in the safety of their white families, they measured one civilization against the other and found the white way of life wanting in the happiness and fulfillment which they had enjoyed in the lodges of their captors.

CHAPTER VIII

INDIAN CHILDREN AND WHITE CIVILIZATION

The preceding chapter pointed out that many white captive children found it exceedingly difficult to readjust when restored to their original families. It would seem logical that Indian children would find a transition to white civilization even more difficult. It is the purpose of this chapter to present case studies of Indian children living among whites and to compare their problems of assimilation with those of white children living among Indians. A comparison will be made, also, of the assimilation of Indian children attending boarding schools with those living in the homes of white families.

While numerous narratives of captivity relate the experiences of white children reared by Indians, American frontier annals provide comparatively few accounts of Indian children captured and reared in white families. Many Indian children were kidnapped and sold into slavery by both whites and other Indian tribes but few of them were in a position to leave a record of their experiences. In New England children of hostile tribes sometimes were sold into slavery in the West Indies during colonial times.

In New France Indians sold children captured from enemy tribes as slaves to French settlers. Some of them became voyageurs and were assimilated sufficiently to come and go in the wilderness with their masters' goods.¹ Many children of primitive Great Basin tribes were kidnapped by both Indians and whites and sold into slavery among the Spanish in New Mexico and California.²

Unlike Indians who adopted white children and treated them as their own flesh and blood, the typical frontier family appears to have had little inclination to bring an Indian child into its household. The few white families which did rear Indian children usually were those of missionaries or owners of substantial plantations or ranches. As an example, Captain Shapley Ross, father of Sul Ross (the future Governor of Texas) captured the son of the famous Comanche Chief, Iron Jacket, and reared him at his home at Waco. In 1861 the youth, known as Nahpo, accompanied Sul Ross when he joined the Confederate Army.³

1 William J. Eccles, "Freedom in Indian and French Colonial Societies," paper delivered at a symposium on "France and North America, the Burden of Freedom," held at the University of Southwestern Louisiana, Lafayette, Louisiana, March 16, 1977.

2 Catherine McDonald, An Indian Girl's Story of a Trading Expedition to the Southwest About 1841. Vol. XI, Winona Adams (ed.), Sources of Northwest History. (Missoula: State University of Montana, 1930), 9.

3 Clarke, "Ya-A-H-H-OO, Warwhoop of the Comanches," 48.

Families motivated by religious or philanthropic considerations seem to have become genuinely attached to their Indian wards, educated them, and tried to help them adjust to white civilization. The case studies which follow were selected in an attempt to obtain evidence of the success or failure of such efforts to assimilate Indian children.

Case of Lincoyer

During the Creek War of 1813 Andrew Jackson sent General John Coffee to attack the town of Talluschatches. The soldiers killed every warrior and some women and children. More than 80 Creek women and children were captured. One dead mother was found still embracing a living baby boy. When the soldiers delivered the prisoners to Jackson's headquarters, the man who as soldier and President would acquire the reputation of being one of the nation's foremost Indian haters immediately sought to save the infant's life. He requested the Indian women to nourish it, but they replied that "all his relatives are dead, kill him too." Then Jackson brought the baby to his own tent, mixed brown sugar with water, and saw to it that it was fed until it could be delivered to the nearest settlement. There it received care at Jackson's expense until the end of the campaign.

At the close of hostilities Jackson sent the child home to the Hermitage. He and Mrs. Jackson treated the boy kindly, named him Lincoyer, and gave him an education.

He became a favorite playmate of the general's other wards. When he became old enough, Jackson found employment for him in Nashville as a harness maker.

Lincoyer adjusted well to white civilization but he retained some Indian traits. He liked to decorate his hair with feathers and to roam the woods at every opportunity. He frightened visitors to the Hermitage by his loud yells and fierce facial expressions.

At the age of 16 Lincoyer contracted consumption. Mrs. Jackson nursed him devotedly but he died within a short time. Jackson made no attempt to conceal his grief and frequently spoke of Lincoyer as his lost child.⁴

The circumstances of this case parallel the experiences of many white children captured by Indians. A war leader responsible for the death of the parents saves a child's life and rears him as a son. In Jackson's correspondence he shows a sincere concern for the boy's welfare. This relationship was conducive to assimilation in much the same manner as that of an Indian family and an adopted white captive.

4 Andrew Jackson to Mrs. Jackson, December 19, 1813, quoted in John Spencer Bassett (ed.), Correspondence of Andrew Jackson, I (Washington: Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1926), 400. Andrew Jackson to Mrs. Jackson, December 7, 1823, Correspondence of Andrew Jackson, III, 215-16; Marquis James, The Life of Andrew Jackson (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1938), 159, 469; Robert W. Remini, Andrew Jackson (New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1966), 57-58; Pauline Wilcox Burke, Emily Donelson of Tennessee (Richmond: Garrett and Massie, 1941), I, 48.

Case of Apache May (Patchy Slaughter)

In the spring of 1896 the wealthy Arizona cattleman, John Slaughter, led a troop of cavalry on the trail of a band of Apaches that had jumped the San Carlos Reservation, massacred several families, and retreated toward Mexico. Slaughter located their camp undetected and the soldiers opened fire. The surprised Indians scattered into the mountains. In their haste they left behind an Apache baby girl, approximately a year old. The baby's father charged the entire troop in a desperate attempt to regain his child, but the soldiers instantly shot him to death.

John Slaughter decided to raise the child as a member of his own family. Mrs. W. E. Hankin, of Bisbee, Arizona, has written a brief account of the family's experiences:

Patchy was just a little wild animal when she came to San Bernardine Ranch. She ate anything, picking up scraps of food from the ground. . . .

When she became accustomed to her new home, she proved an unusually bright child. She understood much that was said to her. Sign language was natural to her; if she wanted bread and sugar, her signs were quite eloquent. She was soon lisping English. She forgot her Indian habits and in a little while was eating from a plate, drinking from a cup, and sleeping in her own little bed. . . .

Above everything else in the world, Patchy loved Mr. Slaughter. She toddled about the place, holding to the strap of one of his boots. . . .

If he took her on his lap, she would sit serenely happy for any length of time. If he rode away, she would wait at the gate for hours, watching patiently for his return.

But Patchy was not always a docile child. When reprimanded by Mrs. Slaughter, she became enraged and threatened to kill her adopted mother when she grew up. Neighbors warned the family that the child was incapable of overcoming her savage heritage, and that sooner or later she would present a threat to their safety.

Patchy did not live long enough to prove or disprove the theory that heredity would triumph over environment. Four years after her adoption the child's clothing caught fire and she burned to death.⁵ There is at least some indication, however, of the development of mutual affection between Patchy and her guardian -- a most essential prerequisite for assimilation.

Case of Carlos Montezuma

Carlos Montezuma, an Apache Indian, was born in Arizona in 1867. In 1871 a band of Pima Indians, employed by the United States Army to track down hostile Apaches, attacked his village while the warriors had gone to sign a peace treaty. Many women and children were killed and Carlos became a captive. The Pimas sold the boy to a

5 Walter Noble Burns, Tombstone (New York: Doubleday, Doran & Company, 1929), 342-50.

traveling photographer named Carlos Gentile. This kindly man took him to Chicago, taught him English, and found him several part-time jobs while he attended school. When Gentile returned to his travels, he sent Carlos to live with a Protestant minister in Urbana, Illinois. There, while continuing his education, he gained the affection of the minister's family. At the age of 14 Carlos entered the University of Illinois. An excellent student, he set his sights on becoming a doctor. While working on farms to finance his education he managed to graduate in three years. Then he entered the Northwestern University Medical School as a part-time student while working at a drug store to pay his expenses. Five years later he received his license to practice medicine.

Shortly after graduation, upon the recommendation of Captain Richard Pratt, Carlos received an appointment as physician and surgeon in the Indian Service. In this capacity he served seven years at Indian schools and reservations in North Dakota, Nevada, Washington and Pennsylvania. In 1896 he resigned his post in protest because he disagreed with the government's paternalistic policies which, he believed, inhibited Indians from developing initiative and fostered idleness and drunkenness. It was his intention, by going into private practice, to demonstrate the capability of Indians to fend for themselves. He succeeded so well that in a short time

he received an appointment as a professor at a medical school where he taught white boys to become doctors.

While Carlos became an outstanding success in the white man's world, he retained his devotion to Indian civilization. Every year he returned to Arizona to spend a month with the Apaches. He published a magazine, Wassaja, which attacked the Bureau of Indian Affairs and pleaded for Indian freedom. He wrote bitterly that Indians "were injured both in body and morals whenever they were given help rather than compelled to help themselves." His philosophy made him the enemy of whites who considered themselves friends of the Indians, and his efforts to reform the Bureau had little effect. Considering himself to have failed his people, and suffering from advanced tuberculosis, he finally abandoned white civilization and returned to the Arizona mountains. In 1923, clad in a breechclout, he died in a wickiup like the one in which he had been born 56 years earlier.

The case of Carlos Montezuma provides a striking example of the lasting effect of the Indian way of life, even on a child who had been removed from it at the age of four. In the white world he demonstrated against formidable odds how much an individual could accomplish regardless of race or color. But, bitter and discouraged

over the failure of white civilization to understand the needs of his people, he chose to return at last to the ways of his ancestors.⁶

Case of Friday, the Arapaho

In 1831 an eight-year-old Arapaho boy became separated from his band. He was near starvation when a caravan on its way to Santa Fe passed his hiding place. Thomas Fitzpatrick, famous scout and mountain man, discovered him and named him Friday because he was found on that day of the week. Friday accompanied the frontiersman on his travels throughout the Rocky Mountains and a warm affection developed between them. By 1833 they were in St. Louis and Friday attended school at least long enough to learn excellent English. He liked his lessons and quickly learned to love the white way of life, but he retained the memory of his Indian family and language.

After three years, Friday's Arapaho family learned of his whereabouts and made every effort to reclaim him. At first the boy insisted on remaining with the whites. After much persuasion, he visited the Arapaho camp and finally readjusted to the Indian way of life. He visited

6 Neil M. Clark, "Dr. Montezuma, Apache: Warrior in Two Worlds," Montana, the Magazine of Western History, XXIII (1973), 56-65; Eastman, Pratt, the Red Man's Moses, 190.

St. Louis frequently, however, and did not finally abandon his wish to live as a white man until a young white girl rejected his proposal of marriage.

Friday became a sub-chief and, but for his love of the whites, he probably would have advanced to head chief. He became a strong force for peace with the whites but a leading raider against the Utes and other enemy tribes. He married an Arapaho and they had one son who died in battle against the Pawnees. In 1878 his band settled on the Wind River Reservation and Friday served as an interpreter until his death in 1881.⁷

This case is of interest because of the closeness of the contest of civilizations for Friday's allegiance. Friday remembered with gratitude to the whites his salvation from starvation, and he had become sufficiently assimilated to resist returning to his Indian family. He stood on the margin between cultures and probably he could have been propelled in either direction by forces beyond his control. The rejection of his proposal of marriage by a white girl was a sufficient force to send him back to his native civilization. But for this incident he probably would have lived his adult life in the manner of a white man.

⁷ LeRoy R. Hafen, Broken Hand (Denver: Old West Publishing Company, 1973), 325-37.

Experiences of Mary, Daughter of Panisciowa

Mary, an Iroquois Indian girl, was the daughter of Panisciowa, a warrior who fought under the command of the Marquis de Lafayette during the American Revolution. Lafayette wrote a letter of appreciation to Panisciowa which Mary obtained at the time of her father's death.

When Lafayette visited Kaskaskia in 1825, Mary visited him and told her life story. It is of interest for the light it sheds upon the difficulty experienced by Indians in abandoning the ways of their ancestors.

After the Revolution some of the Iroquois moved to the Illinois country. Mary's mother died soon after the move and Panisciowa took her to visit the United States Indian Agent at Kaskaskia. The agent persuaded him to allow the family to rear Mary as a sister to their own daughter. Panisciowa visited his daughter from time to time and she, though dissatisfied with a sedentary life, grew up in accordance with the instructions of her white benefactors. She became attached to the family and readily accepted the Christian religion. But the experiences of her infancy were not easily forgotten. She enjoyed wandering in the forest and returned home reluctantly. "When in the cool of the evening, seated at the door of her adopted father's home, she heard in the distance the piercing voice of the Indians she responded with a thrill of joy, imitating the voices, with a

vehemency which frightened the young white girl." And when occasionally warriors consulted the agent or brought him game for the table, she ran to welcome them. She admired their simple ornaments far more than the elaborate jewelry of the whites.

Shortly after Mary reached young womanhood a warrior, Sciakapa, informed her that her father lay gravely ill and wished to see her before he died. Sciakapa guided her through the wilderness and brought her back to Kaskaskia after the death of Panisciowa.

After her father's passing, Sciakapa frequently returned to see her. They soon became attached to each other and in time he persuaded her to follow him into the forest, where she became his wife according to Indian custom. The marriage disappointed her white family, but they forgave her when they recognized that she preferred Indian civilization to their own. And each year during the time the Indians camped near Kaskaskia she rarely allowed a day to pass without going to see them.⁸

Mary's experiences, like Friday's, illustrate the importance of love of a member of the opposite sex in determining the outcome of the contest of civilizations. While Friday's rejection by a white girl sent him back to

⁸ Auguste Levasseur, Lafayette en Amerique, en 1824 et 1825, II (Paris: Baudouin, 1829), 302-23.

the Indians, Mary's acceptance of an Indian suitor had the same result. Both of them retained ties with whites, but both of them spent their adult lives in the manner of Indians.

Case of Lydia Carter

Like Lincoyer and Patchy, Lydia Carter became a captive during an Indian war, but her case differed greatly from theirs. She was seized by another Indian tribe and redeemed by white missionaries. Her case is of interest because of her determined effort to resist returning to her own people.

In October 1817 a large war party of Cherokees, Shawnees, and Delawares invaded Osage territory, taking 60 prisoners, including an Osage Indian girl about four years of age whose parents died in the attack. On their way back to their own country the Cherokees met a missionary who appealed to them to give him the child to educate at the Brainerd Indian School. Receiving a rebuff, the missionary went to Natchez in an attempt to raise funds to offer as ransom. The chief contributor, Mrs. Lydia Carter, gave her name to the child. The missionary then went to Washington and secured the assistance of the Secretary of War, who directed the United States Agent to the Cherokees to send the child to the Indian school.

The Reverend and Mrs. William Chamberlain, teachers at Brainerd, adopted Lydia. They taught her to call them

father and mother and treated her as a sister to their own small daughter, Catherine. Lydia was happy in her new surroundings. She did well in school and learned the English language in less than a year.

In 1820 the Osage Indians learned of Lydia's location and requested her return. The United States Government acceded to their demands and sent an agent to the school to take her back to the tribe. But Lydia was determined to stay with her white family. She fled into the woods and ran five miles before being overtaken. She cried and begged to remain, but to no avail. On the 900 mile journey back to the Osage Nation she became ill and died in the home of a white family.⁹

Case of Bill Hockley and Maria

In 1840 a company of Republic of Texas troops captured two children of a Comanche chief during a fight at San Antonio.¹⁰ One, a 14-year-old boy, was given the

9 (Elias Cornelius), The Little Osage Captive (New York: J. P. Haven, 1822), 14-94.

10 This encounter is known as the Council House Fight. It occurred on March 19, 1840, when several Comanche bands sent representatives to San Antonio to sign a treaty with the young republic. Some sixty-five Indians attended the council, bringing with them the captive, Matilda Lockhart. The Texans demanded the return of additional captives and the Comanches claimed that they held no others. Matilda informed them, however, that the Indians held many captives and planned to surrender them one at a time for large rewards. Troops then surrounded the Indians and a bloody battle began. Seven whites and thirty-five Indians were killed and twenty-seven Indian

name Bill Hockley by G. W. Hockley, a wealthy Texan who provided him with a home.¹¹ The other, an 11-year-old-girl, was called Maria. They lived as adopted children of white families until 1843, when a peace-seeking expedition delivered them back to the powerful and warlike tribe.¹²

This unique case provides an opportunity to appraise the importance of age at the time of captivity of siblings as a factor in assimilation of Indians and to compare results with the Indianization of white siblings seized at the same ages.

The commission, led by Joseph C. Eldridge and Hamilton P. Bee,¹³ located the Indians far out on the plains and approached them under a flag of truce. Chief Paha-yuca had gone on a buffalo hunt and the commissioners remained in the camp several weeks awaiting his return.

women and children were captured. As a result of this massacre the Comanches killed thirteen white captives. Many years of warfare ensued. See the Handbook of Texas, I, 424.

11 Gaines Kincaid to author, January 24, February 5, 1975 (in author's possession).

12 J. W. Wilbarger, Indian Depredations in Texas (Austin: Hutchings Printing House, 1889), 186-90.

13 Gaines Kincaid is editing the diary of Hamilton P. Bee for publication. He states that Thomas Torrey was a member of the Commission and that Bee, a 20-year-old youth, merely went along as Eldridge's friend and guest. Most of the published accounts of this expedition are based upon information provided by Bee. Kincaid reports that the facts recorded in the diary vary considerably from previously published versions.

Fortunately, the chief proved to be peaceably inclined, for he managed after hours of debate to persuade a bare majority of the Comanche council members to respect the flag of truce. Before his arrival most of the Indians favored putting the white men to death.¹⁴

Maria regarded her return to the Comanches as an ordeal. She gave no reply to the greetings of her former people as she no longer could speak a word of Comanche. Bill Hockley, too, refused to converse with the Indians during the absence of their chief, but he remembered the language perfectly well.

At the conclusion of all other deliberations Paha-yuca addressed himself to Bill and Maria. Bill immediately left the side of the white commissioners and rejoined his people. Maria stood mute, holding the hand of Commissioner Eldridge. When Eldridge attempted to place her hand in the chief's, she screamed in anguish. Running behind Eldridge, she begged him "for God's sake not to give her to those people - to have mercy, and not leave her."

After a tense silence Paha-yucca addressed the commissioners:

This is the child of our long mourned chief;
she is of our blood; her aged grandmother
stands ready to receive her, but she has

¹⁴ Earnest Wallace and E. Adamson Hoebel, The Comanches, Lords of the South Plains (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1952), 295.

forgotten her people. She does not want to come to us, and if the Great White Chief only sent her for us to see that she is fat and well taken care of, tell him I thank him and she can go back.

But Eldridge had orders to return both children to the Comanches. He explained his position to the chief: "I have been ordered to give you this child. I have done so, and my duty is fulfilled. But you see she is no longer a Comanche. Give her to me, and let me take her to my home. . . ."

"No," said the chief, "if she is my child I will keep her." He picked up the girl and handed her to her grandmother, who carried her, wailing, from the council lodge.¹⁵

The different responses of these children to restoration to their own people resemble those of white captives of similar age. The case provides an indication that age was as important for Indians as it was for whites in determining their assimilation.

While comparatively few Indian children were adopted and raised by white people, a considerable number of them attended boarding schools after removal from their Indian families by government officials. These officials believed that education would play the decisive role in resolving the conflicts between white and Indian cultures.

¹⁵ Wilbarger, Indian Depredations in Texas, 186-90.

They favored the boarding school over the day school for it could provide a contrasting environment which would transform the personality of the Indian child and remodel him along civilized lines.¹⁶

Among steps believed to be necessary for assimilating Indians through boarding school education were removal from the tribe at an early age and an extended stay in school. Pointing out that learning the English language is the key to assimilation, a report of the Office of Indian Affairs complained that parents resisted placing their children in school at the proper age. It was necessary to begin instructing Indian children at an early age if they were to master the English language and use it "as mental equipment in the thinking process." But few Indian children entered boarding schools before their native languages and customs had become firmly established.¹⁷

W. T. Harris, Commissioner of Education, wrote in 1889 that the boarding school had proved to be an effective means of transforming Indians if the period of schooling lasted from five to ten years. Briefer periods of

16 Evelyn C. Adams, American Indian Education (Morningside Heights, N. Y.: King's Crown Press, 1946), vii - xii, 51.

17 United States Department of the Interior. Office of Indian Affairs. Bulletin No. 9 (1926), 5.

schooling could not "withstand the aggregate influence of old and young men and women who have retained the old forms and who look upon the innovation as idle and useless, not to say sacrilegious."¹⁸ T. J. Morgan, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, recommended universal compulsory education for Indian children. "To resist successfully and overcome the tremendous downward pressure of inherited prejudice and stubborn conservation of centuries, nothing less than universal education should be attempted," he asserted.¹⁹

Attempts at assimilation through education began in Virginia during the early days of European colonization. The Virginia Company charters of 1606 and 1609 noted the obligation to instruct the Indians. Funds were designated to induce colonists to bring Indian boys into their homes for instruction. This attempt failed because few Indian parents would permit it. A few Indian boys went to England to be educated as missionaries, but upon their return they experienced little success in converting the red men and the practice was dropped. During the seventeenth century few Indian children received instruction except those held as hostages or slaves. About 1700, however, the College of William and Mary began to admit them.

¹⁸ United States Department of the Interior. Bureau of Education, Bulletin No. 1 (1890), 4.

¹⁹ Ibid., 9.

Charitable agencies paid their tuition and they studied in segregated classrooms.

In New England an Indian branch of Harvard College provided boarding facilities at an early date. One of the outstanding advocates of Indian education, the Reverend Eleazer Wheelock, established boarding schools at locations designed to remove children great distances from their home environments. Trained as missionaries, most graduates of Wheelock's schools served among the Iroquois. Sir William Johnson charged, however, that "many of Wheelock's missionaries were lapsing into native habits and customs."²⁰

The success of boarding schools as an avenue to assimilation is a matter of dispute. Evelyn C. Adams asserts that, despite 250 years of effort to educate the Indians, the majority remained ignorant of European values. The movement to eradicate Indian culture "failed because it attempted to superimpose outright and quickly a semi-technological work pattern without taking time to relate it to latent values within the older pattern. The procedure ignored one of the cardinal principles of social change, that is, that social progress is a process of growth from old to new practices of worth."²¹

20 Adams, American Indian Education, 15-19.

21 Ibid., 47.

Arthur C. Parker, anthropologist of Indian ancestry, believed that his people could not acquire European civilization rapidly because of the complexity of the new folkways. "Until the peculiar elements of the culture of the Indian began to disintegrate there could be little hope of the success of an Indian educated in the white man's way among his own people, and so he went back to the blanket. There was no place else to go."²²

James Axtell asserts that by the close of the colonial period Indians who had acquired white civilization were almost non-existent. A large number of them had received an education, but almost without exception they divested themselves of civilization as quickly as possible and resumed the cherished practices of their former way of life.²³

Arrell M. Gibson believes that "most (certainly not all) Indian children prefer to return to the aboriginal family - the extended family and all the personal security and comfort it affords."²⁴

Francis P. Prucha states that forced education failed to assimilate Indians. Instead, it shattered their heritage and culture while failing to provide anything to

22 Parker, "Philosophy of Indian Education," 64.

23 Axtell, "The White Indians of Colonial America," 56.

24 Arrell M. Gibson to author, March 20, 1977 (in author's possession).

replace it, "until the Indians became a demoralized people, lost between their historic identify and the white American culture they could not accept." The reformers tried granting citizenship, private ownership of property, and education without successfully assimilating the Indian.²⁵

On the other hand, some sincere friends of the Indian believed that a boarding school education worked wonders in transforming Indian children into productive citizens. The principal proponent of this view was Captain Richard Pratt. At Hampton and Carlisle his goal was destruction of tribalism and absorption of Indian children into the culture of white people. Because day schools on reservations did not remove children from the tribal environment, he advocated the early and total change of surroundings which boarding schools provided. "Civilization is a habit," he insisted. "Language is nothing but a habit. We aren't born with language, nor are we born with ideas either of civilization or savagery. All of these things are forced upon us by our environment after birth." In substantiation of his belief that environment, rather than heredity, controlled child development, he called attention to the case of a white boy captured

25 Francis Paul Prucha (ed.), Americanizing the American Indian (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), 10.

in infancy by the Sioux who attended Carlisle. This boy's academic progress was slower than that of most Indian children.

Pratt and members of his staff believed that their program almost invariably succeeded. Cora M. Folsom kept detailed records of the progress of former students at Hampton. Of the 158 Indians who were graduated and about 1,060 others who attended, she reported that all except 50 retained their white civilization. "The blind man sees, and finds no satisfaction in shutting his eyes again," she explained.

In refutation of charges that every Indian trained at Hampton or Carlisle "had returned to the blanket" except a few employed by the government, Pratt claimed that with three years of training he had prepared 600 Indian boys and girls to live in white homes (the outing system) where they earned wages. Less than one in 20 of them failed to do well. When students finished Carlisle, they received the opportunity to return to the reservation, but hundreds of them remained in eastern cities, entering professions or securing industrial employment. Those who returned to their former homes, he asserted, were generally successful in leading their people toward greater acceptance of white civilization.²⁶

²⁶ Eastman, Pratt, the Red Man's Moses, 71, 97, 136-42, 150, 191, 224-26, 237, 243.

Other government officials, while acclaiming the success of boarding schools, pointed out the need for additional services to assist Indians upon their return to reservations. In 1826 Thomas L. McKenney reported that he had made a personal inspection of Indian schools, and his observations reinforced his conviction that they are more effective than military force in preventing attacks against frontier settlements. He cautioned, however, that the benefits of education could be of a temporary nature if no other government services were provided for Indians who had completed their schooling. He recommended giving graduates sections of land and appropriate farm implements. "They will then have to become an 'intermediate link' between our own citizens, and our wandering neighbors, softening the shades of each, and enjoying the confidence of both," he asserted.²⁷

Similar sentiments were expressed by Elbert Herring, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, in 1833: "They go forth into the world without pecuniary means, and without counsel, to gain a subsistence for themselves. In many instances the enterprise proves difficult, and the difficulty is disheartening. The effort to succeed is

27 Thomas L. McKenney, Report From the Indian Office, Department of War, Office of Indian Affairs, November 20, 1826. United States Congress. 19 Cong., 2 Sess., Sen. Doc. 1, 507-10.

abandoned, and a return to the dwellings and habits of their kindred is the natural consequence."²⁸

The incongruity of educating Indians to be farmers while at the same time depriving them of their lands drew the ire of a Niles Register editorial writer in 1826:

"Where shall we stop? If the Indians are driven back, back, back, it is worse than useless to expend money for their instruction, for they will only feel the severity of their lot more keenly."²⁹

Another point at issue was the use of force in obtaining Indian children to attend boarding schools. Some authorities contended that the children, to all intents and purposes, were the victims of kidnappings.³⁰ Others asserted that many Indian children were eager to go. Elaine Eastman states that, although treaties specified Indian education to be compulsory, no child was removed to Hampton or Carlisle without parental consent. Sincere friends of the Indian visited the reservations to recruit students by enlightening them about the advantages of an education. When Captain Pratt made a recruiting trip to the Rosebud agency, the response exceeded expectations and many Sioux applicants had to be rejected. Two boys were

28 Elbert Herring, Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, November 28, 1833. United States Congress. 23 Cong., 1 Sess., Sen. Doc. 1, 189.

29 Niles Register, February 4, 1826.

30 Collier, The Indians of the Americas, 226.

so eager to attend that they became stowaways on the steamer transporting the children away from their homeland.³¹

The records of conferences between Indian chiefs and government or religious officials sometimes contain references to requests for the education of native children. The Seneca chief, Cornplanter, made such a plea of the Quakers for the Six Nations, Cherokees, Creeks, Choctaws, and Chickasaws in 1791:

Brothers, - We have too little wisdom among us, we cannot teach our children what we perceive their situation requires them to know, and we therefore ask you to instruct some of them; we wish them to be instructed to read and write, and such other things as you teach your own children.

Brothers, - We desire of you to take under your care two Seneca boys, and teach them as your own.

Brothers, - You will consider the request, and let us know what you determine to do. If your hearts are inclined toward us, and you will afford our nation this great advantage, I will send you my son as one of the boys to receive their instruction.³²

But there were also many Indians who resisted sending their children to school. An illustration of the reaction to the forced education of Hopi children is provided by Polingaysi Qoyawayma:

31 Eastman, Pratt, the Red Man's Moses, 79-80.

32 Society of Friends, Some Account of the Conduct of the Religious Society of Friends Towards the Indian Tribes in the Settlement of the Colonies of East and West Jersey and Pennsylvania (London: E. Marsh, 1844), 98-99.

"Lie down behind that roll of bedding, Polingaysi. I shall hide you with a sheep pelt. Hurry!

"Why?" Polingaysi asked in childish bewilderment.

"Do as you're told! her mother snapped. "Bahana is catching children this morning for the school."

"Catching children!" What a fearful-sounding phrase. It made Polingaysi think of the older boys catching rabbits in snares. Without argument she darted across the room and flattened herself behind the rolled-up sheep pelts and blankets. Her mother covered her and returned to the doorway.

Polingaysi could hear her sick brother whimpering on his pallet beside the fireplace, then she heard a strange voice, speaking a language she did not understand. When the mother made no answer, another man began talking, this time in not very good Hopi.

"He says, tell you we are going to take your children to school. Where are they?"

"That sick boy is all I have, except for babies," Polingaysi's mother lied. "He is too sick to go away from home.

There was more talk in the foreign language, then the interpreter said, in Hopi: "Bahana says the boy doesn't look sick. We'll take him. Come!"

Polingaysi's sick brother wept aloud, but he struggled to his feet and went with the men.

While Polingaysi was relieved to escape from the child-catchers at that time, she eventually developed a desire for an education. She stowed away in a wagon in order to go to a boarding school at Riverside, California.

After four years of schooling she felt that she had outgrown the Hopi culture and decided not to return home to Oraibi.³³

The contempt which white friends of the Indian held for native civilization is illustrated by an incident recounted by Francis LaFlesche in his account of experiences at a boarding school operated by the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions on the Omaha Reservation. LaFlesche was the son of an Omaha woman and a French trader. He grew up among the Indians but accompanied his father on trading expeditions. In time he learned much of both cultures and preferred that of the Indians. He became principal chief of the Omaha nation as well as an ethnologist. His unique background enabled him to publish valuable studies of tribal life.

One day the superintendent brought three white church officials to inspect the school. Francis was appalled by their ignorance of Indian culture.

"Are the children taught music?" asked one of the strangers.

"No," replied the superintendent, "but they can sing nearly all of the Sunday-school hymns."

33 Polingaysi Qoyawaymi (Elizabeth Q. White), No Turning Back (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1964), 17-18, 53-64.

"They should be taught music as well as reading and spelling," remarked one of the gentlemen, then, addressing the children, he asked:

"Have your people music, and do they sing?"

"They do," answered one of the large boys.

"I wish you would sing an Indian song for me," continued the man. "I have never heard one."

There was some hesitancy, but suddenly a loud clear voice close to me broke into a Victory song; before a bar was sung another took up the song from the beginning, as it is the custom among the Indians, then the whole school fell in, and we made the room ring. We understood the song, and knew the emotion of which it was the expression. We felt, as we sang, the patriotic thrill of a victorious people who had vanquished their enemies; but the men shook their heads, and one of them said, "That's savage, that's savage! They must be taught music."³⁴

Another Indian child who attended the white men's schools was Thomas Wildcat Alford. During his childhood he had occasionally come in contact with white people and he became interested in learning about their way of life. He left the tribe at the age of 12 and attended boarding schools for several years, hoping that his experiences would be of value to the Shawnees in learning to cope with changes in their life. But it was not to be:

34 Francis LaFlesche, The Middle Five, Indian Schoolboys, of the Omaha Tribe (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1963), vii - xi, 100.

My homecoming was a bitter disappointment to me. Noticing at once the change in my dress and manner, in my speech and conduct, my people received me coldly with suspicion. Almost at once they suspected that I had taken up the white man's religion, along with his habits and manner of conduct. There was no happy gathering of family and friends, as I had so fondly dreamed there might be. Instead of being eager to learn the new ideas I had to teach them, they gave me to understand very plainly that they did not approve of me. I had no real home to go to, and my relatives did not welcome my presence.³⁵

An Indian who became strongly motivated during his boarding school days to accept white civilization was an Apache named Jason Betzinez. His life provides amazing contrasts. A young warrior in Geronimo's band, he shared that ruthless raider's imprisonment in Florida. Then officials selected him to attend school at Carlisle. After accepting white men's ways, he became a Pittsburgh steel worker and fullback of the company's football team. Finally, he returned to the Apaches and attempted to lead them along the white man's road. He married a white woman and applied for land in Oklahoma when he could have moved back to his Arizona homeland. When Jason later risked his life trying to break up a medicine dance, it saddened him to see several of his former Carlisle classmates participating in the festivities. "Instead of showing the blanket Indians a better way of life, the old Apaches showed them how things had always been done," he

35 Alford, Civilization, 111.

lamented. "So the educated Indians joined the ignorant in order not to lose the good will of the tribe."³⁶

Is there anything to be learned from this limited number of case studies as to whether the assimilation of Indian children living with whites paralleled that of white children captured by Indians? The assertion by Benjamin Franklin that Indians invariably chose to return to their own people carries great weight, and much evidence would be needed to disprove it. But it is evident from the material presented in this chapter that among some Indian children living with white families the progress of assimilation closely paralleled that of white children captured by Indians. Patchy Slaughter died at the age of four, but already she had attained many of the cultural traits of her adopted family. Lydia Carter had been with the Chamberlain family only two years when she fled into the woods to evade returning to the Osage nation. Mary, daughter of Panisciowa, eventually married a warrior and returned to his way of life, but she retained the Christian religion as well as close ties to the white family which reared her. Two Waco Indian girls, called Nancy and Fanny, were returned to their tribe in 1843 after living

³⁶ Jason Betzinez, I Fought With Geronimo (Harrisburg, Pa.: Stackpole Co., 1959), 177.

with white families. Both of them screamed and cried when compelled to rejoin their own people.³⁷

A striking parallel to the correlation between age at capture and degree of assimilation of white children is found in the case of Maria and Bill Hockley. The boy was 14 when captured, his sister 11. He retained his knowledge of the Comanche language, while she lost hers. The extent of his assimilation closely approximated that of white boys captured at the same age. When the opportunity presented itself, he rejoined the Indians. But his younger sister reacted differently. Like 11-year-old white captives, she quickly accepted the way of life of her captors. How her story reminds one of the attempts of redeemed white girls to escape from the "captivity" of their original families! Much more evidence is needed before reaching definite conclusions, but there is some indication, at least, that the critical age for assimilation of Indian children did not differ greatly from that which determined the degree of Indianization of white children.

In regard to the Indians who attended boarding schools, it is evident that a considerable number of them became sufficiently attracted to civilization to attempt to lead their own people along the white man's road.

37 Gaines Kincaid to author, January 24, 1975 (in author's possession).

Charles Eastman (a Sioux), Thomas Wildcat Alford (a Shawnee), and Jason Betzinez (an Apache) belonged to three of the most warlike tribes in North American history. Each of them criticized many aspects of white civilization, but they all married white women and successfully adjusted to the new way of life.

How, then, does one account for the large number of Indian children who attended schools and after years of exposure to white civilization rejected it to return to the ways of their forefathers? The answer, perhaps, can be found in the failure of the educated Indians to find a place of esteem in either civilization. The demoralizing effect of rejection by both races is illustrated in the report of a committee to investigate conditions among Indians under white subjection:

An Indian youth has been taken from his friends and conducted to a new people, whose modes of thinking and living, whose pleasures and pursuits are totally dissimilar to those of his own nation. His new friends profess to love him, and a desire for his improvement in human and divine knowledge, and for his eternal salvation; but at the same time endeavour to make him sensible of his inferiority to themselves. To treat him as an equal would mortify their own pride, and degrade themselves in the view of their neighbors. He is put to school; but his fellow students look upon him as a being of an inferior species. He acquires some knowledge, and is taught some ornamental and perhaps useful accomplishments, but the degrading memorials of his inferiority, which are continually before his eyes, remind him of the manners and habits of his own country, where he was once free and equal to his associates. He sighs to return to his friends; but there he meets with the most bitter mortification. He is neither a white man nor an

Indian; as he had no character with us, he has none with them. If he has strength of mind sufficient to renounce all his acquirements, and resume the savage life and manners, he may possibly be again received by his countrymen; but the greater probability is, that he will take refuge from their contempt in the inebriating draught; and when this becomes habitual, he will be guarded from no vice, and secure from no crime.³⁸

John R. Swanton has said that as a social being, an individual treated as inferior by one group usually will ally himself with another. While it was possible for Indians living among whites (or for white captives held by Indians) to conform culturally, it was impossible, because of color differences, to attain complete physical conformity. This physical barrier to complete assimilation, Swanton believes, explains why educated Indians could not gain acceptance as equals in white society and, therefore, almost invariably attempted to return to the ways of their ancestors.³⁹

Arthur C. Parker points out that before the twentieth century the educated Indian seldom succeeded in leading his people:

With any ethnic group there is always a tendency to a leveling. Progress cannot be made any faster than the majority of their ruling

38 Scots Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge. Committee of the Board of Correspondents Who Visited the Oneida and Mohekunuk Indians in 1796. Report. Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society, 1st Series, V, 29-30.

39 Swanton, "Notes on the Mental Assimilation of Races," 501.

element are willing to make it. He who is in advance is alone, unprotected and despised. For very existence he falls back into the group, knowing of things beyond, but not daring to speak. The exceptions are the great men who cling to their convictions and pull the masses with them, but usually the gravity of the greater body attracts irresistibly the vagrant corpuscle, energized though it is. The solitary educated Indian sent back to his own tribe could do little for it. Moreover, he could do little for himself for he had lost his skill as an Indian, and his knowledge of most things was of little use to his kinsmen.⁴⁰

Is it possible, then, to detect differences in degree of assimilation between Indian children reared in white families and others who attended boarding schools? Although generalizations in regard to the former are based upon a limited number of cases, one can conclude that in most instances these children became more completely assimilated than those who attended boarding schools. A majority of them preferred to remain with white people while most graduates of boarding schools chose to return to reservations.

The reason for this difference is suggested when A. Irving Hallowell's theory of transculturalization is considered. In acculturation, changes occur as the result of interaction between one organized culture group and another. While individuals are involved in this sharing and exchange of cultural attributes, acculturation is concerned with changes resulting in the life styles of one

40 Parker, "Philosophy of Indian Education," 64.

or both groups. Transculturalization, on the other hand, involves individuals who are removed from one society to "enter the web of social relations" of another, absorbing "its customs, ideas, and values." Individuals may become completely transculturalized, accepting permanent identification with the new culture. With these individuals, there is a psychological transformation in addition to cultural readaptation. In other individuals, cultural change may be more superficial, lacking psychological depth.

Hallowell asserts that transculturalization "involves the fate of persons rather than changes in socio-cultural systems. The fact that the identification of these persons with the group to which they formerly belonged has been broken, or modified, distinguishes them as a class from persons undergoing readjustment who remain functioning members of an organized group undergoing acculturation."⁴¹

Indian children reared by whites, like white children captured by Indians, participated fully in the process of transculturalization. If they were young at the time they left their natural families, they absorbed the new culture to the extent of psychological transformation, becoming "dark white people" or "white Indians." This process could not occur to a similar extent at boarding

41 Hallowell, "American Indians, White and Black," 523.

schools. Although the schools were intended to remove the student as completely as possible from his native civilization, the fact that he spent his days in the company of other Indians reinforced the strong cultural ties and tribal life ways which he had absorbed before reaching school age. These ties were loosened considerably with Indians participating in the outing system, but, by and large, boarding school children belong in the category of "persons undergoing readjustment who remain functioning members of an organized group." These children were acculturated. Unlike those undergoing transculturalization, they clung to elements of their own culture and a return to its dominating influence was relatively easy.

CHAPTER IX

CONCLUSION

The outcome of the conflict between Indians and whites for control of the North American continent was determined in large part by cultural differences. Such factors as weapons technology, the ability of the whites to coordinate and sustain military operations, the development of Indian dependence upon European trade goods, and the introduction of European and African diseases, were crucial in bringing about the eventual defeat of the native Americans. But the conflict lasted almost four centuries, and it is evident that Indian civilization, too, possessed qualities which sustained the tribes in resisting their enemies.

One method of interpreting events in a contest of civilizations is to analyze factors which facilitated or retarded assimilation. Cultural contact, usually between one group which considers itself superior and another which acknowledges itself to be inferior, has sometimes led to the fusion of races, or to acculturation (large-scale borrowing of traits by one group from another), or to transculturation (assimilation of individuals of one race

by another). Inter-breeding on a scale resulting in fusion of the white and red races was blocked by color line distinctions.¹ Acculturation was considered by white friends of the Indian to be a quick and logical solution to the problem of civilizing the native Americans, but it failed during frontier times because the tribes refused to consider themselves inferior and insisted upon preserving their own cultural integrity, borrowing only selected material traits which would make their way of life easier.² Transculturation took place, however, of individuals of one race who were reared by the other. The experiences of these transculturites are of interest not only for their contributions to our knowledge of frontier history but, also, because they provide a comparison of the importance of heredity and environment as cultural determinants. The narratives of hundreds of whites who were captured by Indians provide an opportunity to study transculturation.

To determine why some captives became "white Indians" while others completely rejected Indian culture,

1 In some areas near the Atlantic Coast, fusion occurred between reds and blacks, the Indians being absorbed.

2 Ethnocentrism of all whites, humanitarians as well as coveters of Indian land, determined that communal living must give way to individual land ownership and that hunting must be replaced by farming in order to force acculturation upon the native Americans whether they desired it or not.

I have analyzed a number of factors that facilitated or retarded assimilation. To ascertain whether assimilation occurred along similar lines among both races, the experiences of these captives were compared to those of Indian children who were reared by whites or educated in boarding schools. In addition, the experiences of captives returned to white civilization were analyzed to learn whether the factors which facilitated assimilation retarded reacculturation.

The literature on Indian-white relationships reveals a lack of unanimity among authorities regarding assimilation and many other matters relating to this contest of civilizations. To compensate for the questionable reliability of narratives of captivity, the lack of Indian sources, and the conflicting evidence regarding causes and consequences of Indianization, I conferred with several ethnohistorians. While the interpretations of these scholars are included earlier in this thesis, the conclusions presented here are my own.

In seeking to understand what factors motivated captives to accept or reject Indian civilization, there is a tendency to think in terms of the superiority of one culture to another. During frontier times, most Americans of European descent considered their own civilization to be vastly superior to that of the Indians. They regarded assimilation of whites by Indian tribes to be a lowering

of standards, a leveling of culture, a descent to savagery. Confronted by the fact that many captives became substantially Indianized, they reasoned that it was much easier for lower class whites to descend to idleness and idolatry than to improve their lives by hard work, frugality, and strict adherence to the tenets of Christianity.

Although the Indians succeeded in assimilating a great many white captives, well meaning white men insisted upon the necessity of assimilating the Indians, either for their survival in this world or their salvation in the next. The earliest colonists believed that it was their duty to Christianize the Indians. Later, when it became evident that contacts with frontiersmen demoralized the Indians, white humanitarians advocated tribal removal in order to gain time to permit acculturation in an orderly manner.

Before the twentieth century only a few contemplative men acknowledged that in a contest between Indian and white civilizations, the native American culture offered significant advantages. Indian family life was closer knit than that of most whites. Indian parents treated a captive white child as if he had been born of their union. They loved him openly, treated him kindly, trained him as expertly as possible in the skills needed in their society, and permitted him to enjoy himself according

to his fancy. His adopted status carried over into the extended family and moiety or gens, requiring that his kinspeople protect him and contribute to his welfare exactly as they would have done if he had been a biological relative. And the tribe as a whole usually placed no limits on his eligibility to advance to a position of leadership.

Young male captives spent their days hunting and fishing, canoeing, horseback riding, and enjoying the pleasures of life in the open. They were spared the drudgery that characterized the lives that most white youths had known at home. Captive girls were expected to work, just as their adoptive mothers did, but they enjoyed many pleasures in a society which generally indulged children. When they matured, they could expect marriage to a chief or a warrior who would provide them with the necessities of life. Indian life was remarkably attuned to nature and it appealed to young people who had not yet conformed to the mores of white civilization. Assimilated captives were supported by a communal life style in which everyone shared in nature's bounty or scarcity, and in a religion which brought most of them assurance rather than apprehension.

In many instances, adventurous white men were as attracted to the Indian life-style as were captive children.³ Some frontiersmen, such as William Johnson and George Croghan, could adapt to the white or Indian life-style with equal enthusiasm. Others, attracted by profits from trapping or trading or by the lure of Indian women, spent many years in the wilderness, but most of them retained the core of white civilization and eventually returned to it.

One of the factors most frequently mentioned by historians and anthropologists as affecting assimilation was the pre-captivity cultural milieu of the captive. It has been claimed that captives from refined, well-educated families rejected the degrading cultural descent to a more primitive civilization while individuals from poor backwoods environments found the smaller cultural gap much easier to bridge. A similar claim has been made for captives who had received religious training. As many Indian culture traits involved actions considered by Christians to be sinful, it has been suggested that religious training constituted a barrier to assimilation. But these claims are not supported by the evidence found in narratives of captivity. Hundreds of Puritan children who

3 Indian culture was abhorrent to most mature white female captives, however, and rarely did a white woman join a tribe voluntarily.

came from well educated families and had been trained in their religion from an early age were captured in New England. Yet this preparation did not prevent them from choosing to remain with their Indian captors or French redeemers, or from converting to the Indian or Catholic religions. Many children of poorly educated backwoods families became assimilated in much the same manner, accepting the Indian culture and religion and preferring to remain with their captors when given the opportunity to return to white relatives. On the other hand, there were captives reared in refined families who rejected the Indian life style, and the same could be said of some who had received little education or religious training. It seems, therefore, that a refined or religious pre-captivity cultural milieu was of little importance as a determinant in the assimilation of white captives.

A related theory attributes the rejection or acceptance of assimilation to race or ethnic origin. According to this claim, Anglo-Saxon captives refused to lower themselves to the level of Indian civilization while Mexicans found it comparatively easy because they, too, were products of an inferior culture. The experiences of more than fifty Anglo-American, German-American, Mexican, French-Canadian, and Negro captives were analyzed during this study and no correlation between race or ethnic background and degree of assimilation could be established.

Many Mexicans became thoroughly assimilated, but others did not--and the same was true of captives of other stocks. Race, therefore, was apparently no more important than family background or religious training in determining the course and degree of assimilation of captives.

If the pre-captivity milieu was unimportant as a determinant in assimilation, perhaps the cultural characteristics of the captors would provide answers as to why one captive embraced the Indian life style and another detested it. The North American continent contained a rich mixture of native American cultures, ranging from primitive hunting-gathering societies in the Great Basin to the skilled agriculturists of the Southeast called the Five Civilized Tribes. Among culture traits of crucial importance to captives undergoing transculturation were subsistence patterns, habitations, and, above all, treatment of prisoners. These traits varied widely among the tribes.

Authors of narratives of captivity almost always reported enduring great hardships, at least during the first few days in Indian hands. In many cases, topographic or climatic conditions and lack of food and shelter made life almost unendurable. Thus captives of desert tribes starved during times of scarcity, and white persons held on the northern plains froze during severe winters. Captives fared somewhat better in the villages of sedentary Indians where subsistence depended on agriculture and food

storage rather than gathering and hunting, but living conditions eliminated the unfit in most Indian societies.

Ethnohistorians express widely differing views concerning the treatment of captives and its effect on assimilation. James Axtell contends that the cruelty of eastern Indians to captives has been greatly exaggerated and that they nourished the weak and defenseless while introducing them to the satisfactions of native American civilization.⁴ Walter S. Campbell, on the other hand, charges that the eastern Indians tormented captives with the fagot and the stake, while he could find few authentic cases of such tortures by western Indians.⁵ William E. Fenton believes that Indians were less cruel than they have been pictured and he surmises that without kind treatment no assimilation could have developed.⁶ How, then, is one to account for the tortures described in most narratives of captivity, even in reminiscences of former captives who resisted redemption? It is my conclusion that Indians of all culture areas received emotional satisfaction while tormenting captives to celebrate the successful return of

4 James Axtell, "The White Indians of Colonial America," 68-81.

5 Walter S. Campbell, "The Plains Indian in Literature and Life," 191-92.

6 William N. Fenton to author, February 7, 1977 (in author's possession).

a war party. But after the initial victory dance, running of the gauntlet, or other traditional forms of ceremonial chastisement ended, treatment of captives varied widely among tribes or even between individual captors. Circumstance and caprice frequently determined whether a captive died under torture, became a slave, or enjoyed the kind treatment accorded to adopted members of the tribe. Life or death frequently depended upon the mood of the first warrior to touch a captive. If the captor had recently lost a relative, he might take revenge on the first white person he saw. On the other hand, he might save the captive's life in order to adopt him as a replacement. Adoption usually brought an end to cruel treatment, but abuse might be resumed if the captor obtained liquor or if the captive tried to escape or proved to be an unsatisfactory substitute. Wilcomb E. Washburn asserts that an adopted captive who proved to be a weakling might be killed or sold into slavery.⁷

In all native American culture areas mature captive women experienced treatment which precluded acceptance of the Indian way of life. Foremost among their concerns was sexual abuse. East of the Mississippi, rape by Indians was almost unknown because of incest taboos. Warriors would not violate a captive woman since she might eventually

⁷ Wilcomb E. Washburn to author, February 11, 1977 (in author's possession).

become an adopted relative in the moiety or clan. Captive women in the eastern woodlands were urged to marry Indians and sometimes complied in order to gain a provider, but if they chose to remain single, no punishment was imposed upon them. West of the Mississippi River, however, the opposite situation prevailed. Rape of adult female captives occurred so frequently that many redeemed white women were pregnant at the time of their recovery. The ordeal of rape or forced marriage made assimilation almost impossible for mature female captives.

Western Indians were somewhat more brutal in their treatment of captive children than eastern Indians. In the West, children were more likely to be traded from tribe to tribe and treated as servants or slaves. Adoption was delayed somewhat longer in the West and, therefore, the period of cruel treatment lasted longer. After adoption, however, treatment was similar in all regions.

Except during colonial times (when captives were ransomed by the French), most mature white males who fell into Indian hands forfeited their lives in all regions of the present United States. In the East, however, an especially brave white enemy might be spared in the hope that he could be converted to the Indian way of life. And in the Pacific Northwest, the most property-conscious of all native American culture areas, a mature white man might be saved if he possessed skills which could be used to enrich his master.

Having concluded that differences in the treatment of captives prevailed among native culture areas, the question arises as to how much these differences determined the course and degree of assimilation. It is my conclusion that treatment had a surprisingly minor influence on assimilation. Regardless of the way they were treated, few children successfully resisted assimilation. Men captives, if permitted to live, rarely rejected a chance to escape. In the case of mature women captives, many died as a result of mistreatment and hardship, especially in the West. Among survivors in all regions, few females who were captured as adults embraced the Indian way of life, although some women who had half-Indian children chose to remain with their captors. While narratives of captivity indicate that white girls reared by Indians regarded marriage to warriors as natural and loved their Indian husbands, white women captured as adults who had sexual relations with Indians feared ostracism by their own people. A double standard permitted white frontier men to indulge themselves with Indian women,⁸ but white women who had sexual relations with Indians felt disgraced even though they often had no choice in the matter.⁹

8 Puritan clergymen urged both men and women not to have sexual relations with Indians, but some Puritan men used female Indian slaves for that purpose.

9 I disagree with Savoie Lottinville in his belief that "love, not shame," caused them to reject redemption: Savoie Lottinville to author, February 17, 1977 (in author's possession).

One of the factors determining degree of assimilation which is usually assumed to be important was the length of captivity. Certainly one would expect that a captive who lived with the Indians only a few months would absorb little of their culture, while one who remained in captivity for many years would learn the language, acquire the skills needed for survival in their society, form friendships with Indians who treated him kindly, and, perhaps, develop a sufficient liking for their way of life to reject redemption. And it is true, other factors being equal, that a lengthy captivity resulted in greater assimilation than a brief one. But the difference is not nearly so marked as one might expect. In fact, the most unexpected finding of this dissertation is that many captives became substantially assimilated in a matter of months.

How is one to account for immediate acceptance of a new and exotic civilization? As pointed out above, some white persons were attracted to the Indian life style.¹⁰ Many men moved to the frontier seeking freedom from restraint, profits from trapping or trading, and the allure

¹⁰ An example, according to Allan W. Eckert, was the formidable Shawnee war chief, Blue Jacket. Eckert identifies Blue Jacket as a white man, Marmaduke Van Swearingen, captured at the age of 17, who had studied Shawnee language and lore and welcomed his captors. See Allan W. Eckert, Blue Jacket (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1969), 1-16.

of native women. They looked forward with pleasure to participating, at least temporarily, in life in the Indian village.

But what about the large number of whites who were seized by raiders, who witnessed the murder of relatives, who were brutally beaten and threatened with death? Their rapid assimilation is explained by the adaptability of youth. The traumatic experiences of captivity which sometimes caused insanity in adults frequently shocked children so as to erase recollections of an earlier life except for subliminal memories that surfaced fleetingly in distorted form. In such cases the native American culture quickly supplanted white civilization.¹¹ In some instances this rapid and substantial assimilation of captives was not permanent, however, for at least a few "white Indians" voluntarily returned to a civilization that they could barely remember after many years with the tribe. A desire to visit relatives became rekindled when they came in contact with white people who took an interest in their redemption. Sometimes these encounters occurred during trading expeditions. Usually, however, decisions to leave the Indians were made after the tribes moved to reservations and changes occurred in their traditional ways of life. These captives met agents, teachers, and missionaries

¹¹ For an account of the effect of shock on a young captive see Walter Prescott Webb, The Texas Rangers (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1965), 35-38.

who assisted them to regain the use of their native languages and induced them to reflect upon their lives before captivity. When shadowy memories focused sufficiently to recall names or places, agency personnel and newspaper editors helped them to locate their white families.

The experiences of more than 50 persons who were held by the Indians for periods ranging from a few months to 30 years were analyzed during this study and it is evident that although captives held for fewer than five years were less assimilated, by and large, than those held for longer periods, there were many who became highly Indianized in a year or less. It is notable, also, that several captives who lived with the Indians for more than 20 years became less assimilated than others held for comparatively brief periods. Clearly, then, length of captivity was not the most crucial factor in assimilation.

Regardless of which aspect of assimilation is under consideration, a researcher finds himself returning to the factor of age at the time of captivity as the major determinant. Having concluded that the captive's original family and ethnic background was inconsequential, that the cultural mores of the capturing tribe sometimes delayed but did not prevent assimilation, and that the length of time in captivity did not always correlate significantly with Indianization, it becomes apparent that age was of crucial importance.

An infant removed from his parents and totally immersed in a dissimilar culture adapts without difficulty to the new way of life because he retains no memory of any other. A white captive infant learned the tribal language as easily as that of his natural parents, and he conformed completely to native American culture. Deprived of parents, a small child must have someone to turn to for security, and an Indian woman provided that security for captive children. This surrogate mother gave the child affection, attended the wounds inflicted during the capture and its aftermath, and shielded the captive from the terrors of threatening warriors. Under such circumstances it is not surprising that many redeemed captives cherished memories of Indian mothers who guided them along the path of transculturation. Children captured when quite small learned the Indian languages as a matter of course and usually forgot their native speech in a short time. Given Indian playmates to instruct them, they soon learned to enjoy their new way of life and, were it not for the color of their skins, they could scarcely have been singled out from natural born Indians.

Assimilation was more difficult for children captured between the ages of eight and 11. They usually retained some memory of an earlier life and at least a few words of their native languages as long as they lived. At least for a time they grieved for their parents, suffered torments at the hands of their captors, and feared that

they would be killed. The instinct for self-preservation helped them to accept their new surroundings, however, for on the march to the Indian village they realized that they could not find the way back to the settlements. Keeping up with their captors was necessary for survival, and fear of starvation in the wilderness provided the first incentive to stay with the Indians. Brutal treatment gave way in time to a change for the better, a necessary stage in the assimilation process. White children observed how much better adopted captives were treated, and this in itself was a powerful inducement to conform to Indian ways. Among the eastern Indians, especially, adoption usually followed soon after capture and provided a major impetus toward Indianization. The ritual of adoption made the captive at least symbolically an Indian and it was the most important event in transculturation. Some children believed that the ceremony transformed them into real Indians. Moreover, adopted children discovered that there were many pleasures associated with Indian life. Playmates taught them Indian games and customs. Warriors introduced boys to the skills of hunting and raiding, a life of adventure that contrasted strongly with the humdrum existence that had characterized their earlier days. Repulsed at first by Indian food, they soon began to relish their meals--a major step in transculturation. Enjoying many facets of their new lives, these children became Indianized at a rapid rate.

Assimilation was much more difficult for captives who had reached the age of puberty. While variations occurred between one captive and another, the evidence provided by many case studies shows that the age of 12 constituted a breaking point between girls who readily accepted and those who resisted the Indian way of life. Boys of 12 and 13, while retaining many characteristics of life before captivity, were attracted more than girls to Indian civilization. Most of them eventually became substantially assimilated, and the critical age which separated boys who became "white Indians" from those who retained a desire to escape was 14.

Why were these ages of such critical importance in determining the course and degree of assimilation? There were at least two important reasons, one stemming from the child's native culture and the other from the cultural traits of the captors. A person nearing the age of puberty naturally begins to acquire some knowledge and awareness of sexuality. Particularly in the case of girls, parents become concerned about the possibility of undesirable sexual involvement and warn their daughters against it. The idea of sexual relations with men of other races was especially repugnant to frontier parents and they transmitted these feelings to daughters of childbearing age. Thus when these girls fell into Indian hands they had already acquired a fear and abhorrence of rape and forced marriage which created an almost impassible barrier to a

willing acceptance of the new culture. And the treatment of these girls by Indian men frequently proved the validity of their apprehensions. Girls captured below the age of 12 usually were treated as children, but young women of childbearing age falling into the hands of western Indians frequently were raped. Their mental preconditioning, when combined with the horror of the dreaded act, often made assimilation and even survival impossible. While captive girls of childbearing age were not raped by eastern Indians, they remained apprehensive that they would be forced into marriage.

Sexual concerns were of little importance in blocking assimilation of white males, but boys who had reached the age of puberty before capture had had time to absorb the hatred of Indians which characterized the attitudes of most frontier families. They enjoyed the adventures of outdoor life and many of them in time married Indian women, but they retained the ingrained contempt for a race which they considered inferior to their own. Assimilation was incomplete in these instances, for these youths almost always chose to return to their white families.

Many captives who returned to white civilization experienced difficulty in casting off traits of tribal culture and the question arises as to whether captives' readjustment to white society retraced the course of their

Indianization. I analyzed the experiences of a considerable number of former captives to see if there was a correlation between difficulty of readjustment and the length of time in captivity. In most cases, a lengthy captivity caused a difficult readjustment. But it is evident, also, that many former captives experienced great difficulty in readjusting after living with the Indians less than two years. These redeemed captives conceded that for a long time they found white men's food, clothing, and houses to be almost intolerable. Some of them, particularly Puritan children, were tormented by feelings of guilt for having survived the massacre of their parents, brothers, and sisters. Others missed their Indian foster parents so much that they rejected their white relatives. Older redeemed captives believed that their white neighbors blamed them for acquiring Indian traits and suspected them of improper conduct while in captivity. A considerable number of these former captives attempted to run away to rejoin the Indians, while others who had been held in captivity for many years made more successful readjustments. A few former captives immediately turned upon their Indian friends and led military or scalp hunting expeditions against them. Based on the evidence provided by these experiences, it is evident that in most cases a long captivity resulted in a more difficult readjustment, but a large number of exceptions prevent definitive generalization.

It was impossible, also, to correlate readjustment difficulty with age at the time of capture by Indians. Of course, captives who had been old enough when taken to resist assimilation experienced fewer problems when restored to their white families than did those who had become greatly Indianized. But among substantially assimilated redeemed captives, some who had been taken as infants made more successful readjustments than did others who had been old enough when captured to remember their white relatives. Constant watchfulness and much patience were required for extended periods to reassimilate many former captives who had lived from eight to ten years with their white families before falling into Indian hands. In some cases the only way to prevent them from abandoning white civilization was to provide them with employment, such as interpreting, trading, or scouting, that permitted them to spend much of their time in the Indian country.

It is concluded that factors associated with attitudes existing in white society were more important than age at the time of capture or length of time in captivity in enabling the redeemed captive to become re-assimilated. Loving and patient relatives usually wore down the resistance of even the most Indianized redeemed captive. On the other hand, it was very difficult for a former captive to make a place for himself in white society when relatives or neighbors feared him as a dangerous savage or patronized him as a simpleton. Some captives who

voluntarily returned to white civilization after many years of Indian life eventually rejoined the tribe because of rejection by whites and inability to make a living in a competitive society.

Because so many redeemed captives found reassimilation difficult, one might assume that Indian children found it impossible to accept white civilization, and several well informed observers have declared that such was the case, reporting that every captured Indian child reared by a white family sought the opportunity to return to the tribe. Philosophers and religious leaders expressed amazement that an Indian child who had been shown the advantages of civilization and the verities of Christianity would abandon them without hesitation and return to the disorders and superstitions of barbaric life.

But was this a correct assessment of the situation? Not according to the evidence presented in the cases analyzed in this study. On the contrary, a captured Indian child who was reared in a white family became assimilated in much the same manner as a white child reared in an Indian family. If the whites treated a young Indian child kindly and made a determined effort to teach him their values and ways, he would choose to remain with them when given the opportunity to return to his own people. The determining factor was age at the time of removal from natural parents for Indian children as well as for whites.

There was, however, a difference between the degree of assimilation of Indian children reared in white families and others educated in boarding schools away from the tribe. Boarding school children were more likely to cling to native traditions than were children reared in white families. There were two reasons for this difference. First, few frontier families were willing to take in an Indian child. The exceptions were missionaries or families of unusual culture and wealth. These families loved and respected the Indian child and the child responded by admiring his foster parents, conditions which were necessary for assimilation to take place. Children in boarding schools, on the other hand, generally were regarded as unfortunates whose inferior culture must be eradicated before they could rise above a condition of savagery. An individual who fails to find acceptance in one civilization will seek it in another, and products of Indian boarding schools seldom were regarded as equals when they attempted to make their way in the white man's world.¹²

12 An excellent example is provided by the case of James McDonald, a Choctaw youth who was employed in the Office of Indian Affairs by Thomas McKenney. He demonstrated such ability that McKenney sent him at government expense to Ohio to study law. After passing the bar examinations he attempted to establish a practice in Mississippi, but white people refused to give him any legal work. He proposed marriage to a white woman and when she rejected him he became an alcoholic. Finally he committed suicide. This tragedy so shocked McKenney that he began to favor Indian removal as the only hope for their survival. See Herman J. Viola, "Early American Indian Policy," in Jane F. Smith and Robert Kvasnicka (eds.), Indian-White Relations: a Persistent Paradox (Washington: Howard University Press, 1976), 53-54.

The second reason for a difference between the assimilation of Indian children reared in white families and those attending boarding schools is found in the process of transculturation. An Indian child reared in a white family spent most of his time in the company of white people. A boarding school child, on the other hand, spent most of his time in the company of other Indians. These associations reinforced native American traditions and prevented the tribal ties from becoming completely or permanently severed. Assimilation of these individuals, therefore, usually was partial and temporary.

Based upon the experiences of both white and Indian children, no evidence was found of psychological distinctions between races. Cultural factors rather than hereditary ones determined the course and degree of assimilation. And these factors worked for Indian children reared in white families in the same way they did for white captive children adopted and cherished by Indian parents. If removed from their natural parents early enough, they quickly acquired the cultural traits of the new civilization.

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Washburn, Wilcomb E., February 11, 1977.

VITA

Joseph Norman Heard was born at Austin, Texas, and reared at Refugio, Texas, graduating from Refugio High School in 1939. From 1939 to 1941 he attended Texas College of Arts and Industries at Kingsville. From 1942 to 1945 he served in the United States Navy. After World War II he enrolled at the University of Texas at Austin. He received the Bachelor of Journalism Degree (1947), the Master of Journalism Degree (1949), and the Master of Library Science Degree (1951), from that institution.

He has held the following library positions: Orders Assistant, the University of Texas (1949-51); Order Librarian, Texas Technological College (1951-53); Assistant Librarian, Texas College of Arts and Industries (1953-55); Director of Libraries, Pan American University (1955-62); Order Librarian, Northwestern State College (1962-63); Acquisitions Librarian, Louisiana State University (1963-65); Head Librarian, Southeastern Louisiana University (1965-69); Associate Director, University of Southwestern Louisiana (1969-77). His present position is Professor of Library Science and Acting Director of the Library at the University of Southwestern Louisiana.

He has published the following books: Bookman's Guide to Americana (Washington: Scarecrow Press, 1953, now in the seventh edition); Hope Through Doing (New York: John Day Publishing Company, 1968); The Black Frontiersmen (New York: John Day Publishing Company, 1969); and White Into Red (Metuchen, N. J., Scarecrow Press, 1973). He contributed a chapter to Alfred de Grazia, ed., Grassroots Private Welfare (New York: New York University Press, 1957); and twenty articles to Walter Prescott Webb and H. Bailey Carroll, eds., The Handbook of Texas (Austin, Texas State Historical Association, 1952).

For many years he has been an active worker in the movement to provide education and employment for the handicapped. He founded the South Texas Habilitation Center at Edinburg, Texas; the Valley Botanical Garden at McAllen Texas; and the Acadian Village and Gardens at Lafayette, Louisiana. He has served on the Boards of Directors of both the Texas and Louisiana Associations for Retarded Citizens. In 1977 he was appointed by Governor Edwin Edwards to represent Louisiana at the White House Conference on the Handicapped at Washington, D. C.

He is married to the former Joyce Ann Boudreaux and they have three children.

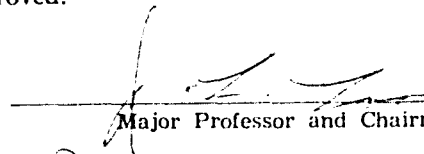
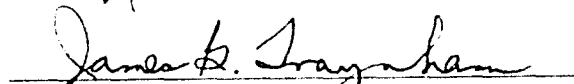
EXAMINATION AND THESIS REPORT

Candidate: Joseph Norman Heard

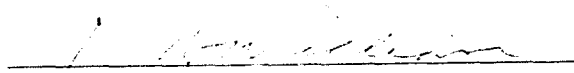
Major Field: History

Title of Thesis: THE ASSIMILATION OF CAPTIVES ON THE AMERICAN FRONTIER
IN THE EIGHTEENTH AND NINETEENTH CENTURIES

Approved:


Major Professor and Chairman

Dean of the Graduate School

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:


William G. Haug
Frederic A. Young Jr.
Robert A. Becker

Date of Examination:

December 2, 1977